Approved for Use With MEGATRAVELLER™ and 2300™

the TRAVELLERS' Digest

U.S. $4.95

Grand Tour Conclusion Issue!

Number 21

Return to the Marches
by Gary L. Thomas

Low Berths in MegaTraveller
A Detailed Look at Suspended Animation

Rebel Reporter
Face to Face with the Aslan

Grand Tour Retrospective Interview!
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2300AD:
Mini Adventures in the American Arm

Digest Group Publications

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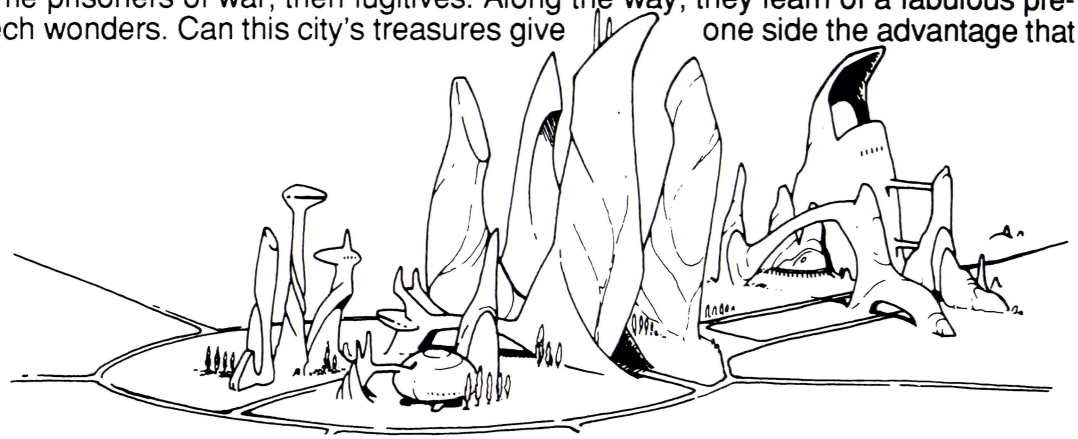

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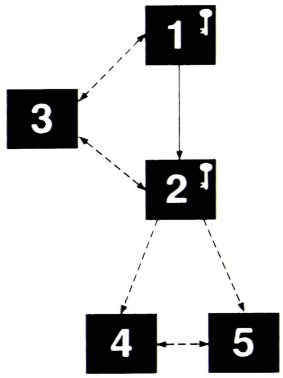

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One Last Stop

"Sadly, once events conspire to force the extinction of a species, the universe seems very reluctant to let the last few survivors live."

— Akidda Laagiir, from "Pandora's Children" in the *Travellers' Digest,* 1114

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Editors' Digest

FROM THE DESKS OF GARY L. THOMAS AND JOE D. FUGATE SR.

Well here we are — the *Travellers' Digest's* ultimate issue. We hope you've enjoyed the ride as much as we liked the driving! It'd be easy for us to spend this entire column taking about where we've been, but you can get that from this issue's interview with DGP's co-founders. Instead, let's look ahead at where we're going.

As many of you know by now, our new magazine, *The MegaTraveller Journal*, premieres late this year — sitting in the seat that would have held a theoretical *Travellers' Digest* number 22. The adventures in the *Journal* (boy it's nice to be able to call a **Traveller** publication by that name again) will be returning us to the game's birthplace: the Domain of Deneb (which includes the Spinward Marches). We'll get our first really close look at how the Rebellion has changed the face of the Traveller universe.

Several of the *Digest's* features will continue into the *Journal*, while a number of new ones will start up. For example, each issue will include "The Deneb Information Service Newsbriefs," reporting on the latest happenings in the Domain and beyond after the fashion of ***GDW's*** *Traveller News Service.*

For those who don't set their gaming in the Domain of Deneb, the *Journal* will supply plenty of support for Traveller in general. All the new equipment, ships, and a variety of informative articles will be useful anywhere in Traveller. There will something for every kind of MegaTraveller player and referee.

Another new column debuting in *Journal #1* is "Gaming By Computer." There is more game-aid software these days being written by gamers, and much of it is quite good. We felt that a column reviewing and discussing this software is long overdue.

This column is a service to those of you who have written programs to assist you in playing MegaTraveller. There is no cost for the review space — just send in your software and we will review it. We are also interested in getting some of you to write reviews. Each review should run about 250 words, and about the only restriction is that we prefer you not be one of the people who helped develop the software you are reviewing. Also, when reviewing the software, mention whether or not the author is willing to provide support for his software (take calls, answer questions, and so on).

This column also give us a way to review our own programs that we use internally — programs that do not have a broad enough appeal to be sold as professional packages, yet they are useful enough that someone may want to get a copy on an "as is" basis.

OUR 2300AD COVERAGE ENDS

This issue marks the end of our 2300AD support, as the *MegaTraveller Journal* will be dedicated entirely to MegaTraveller. However, 2300 fans need not despair — projects from other sources that that lie ahead actually promise an *increase* in 2300AD game support!

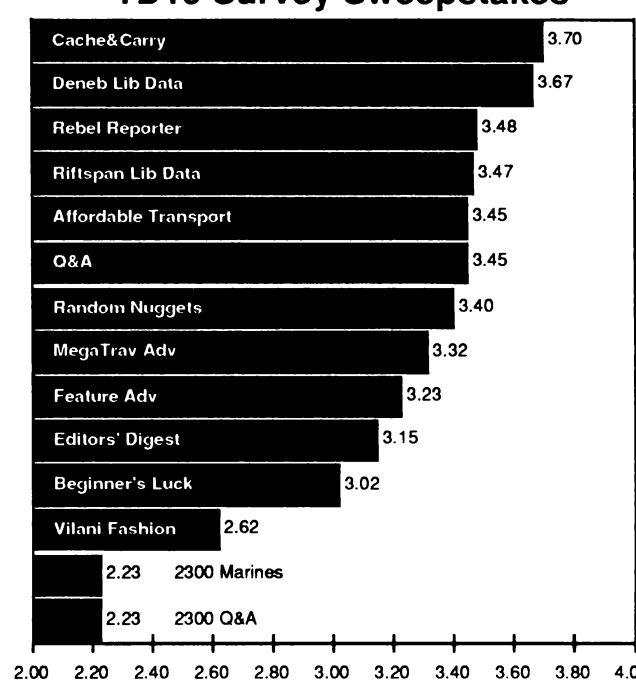
First off, there's a GDW-sponsored 2300AD newsletter in the works. It will be an eight-page publication released on a quarterly basis and is dedicated to filling in the background of the universe as well as concentrating primarily on the American Arm. The pilot issue, which discusses the "current" American president, is due out in early October and will be available free from GDW. The first "real" issue is planned to be released in November. For more information on content and subscriptions, send a SASE to the newsletter's editor: Clare Hess, PO Box 31146, Santa Barabara, CA 93130.

Additionally, *Seeker* is continuing their product support for the 2300 line. Their newest release is a set of deckplans for an ASF vessel, the *Hampton*. Besides this, they have a number of 2300-related projects in the wings. For more information and a free catalog, send to: Seeker Gaming Systems, PO Box 519, Mountain Home, ID 83647-0519.

The departure of 2300 from our pages also means Lester Smith's tenure as our 2300AD editor is at an end. Lester is off to work on numerous other gaming projects — with grad school heaped on top of the whole load. We all wish him the best of luck with his ambitious workload — *and thanks a lot, Les!*

We hope you all have enjoyed the ***Travellers' Digest Magazine.*** *See you next issue as the new* ***MegaTraveller Journal!***

TD19 Survey Sweepstakes



AKIDDA LAAGIIR, JOURNALIST

STATS:
858AAB age 52 8 terms Cr 21,000
Interview-5, Streetwise-3, Grav Vehicle-1, Wheeled Vehicle-1, Admin–1, Brawling-1, Computer-0
Holocrystal Recorder
Starport A, Large, Dense Atm, Wet, High Pop, Mod Law, High Stellar
Born: 319-1059

Position: Current recipient of the *Travellers' Digest* Touring Award.

Akidda Laagiir started at age 18 as a copy boy with the *Mora World Review*; his friendly face and ability to gain the trust of others contributed to his steady career progress.

Living on Mora, with its charismatic dictator, the Duchess Delphine the Matriarch, is sometimes a trying experience for any journalist, which may explain his occasionally iconoclastic actions. He is slightly prejudiced against "the system", preferring fresh ideas and fresh ways of doing things. This boldness (especially in interview situations) has also contributed favorably to his career.

His admin skill was learned while moving up the ranks, but it is a skill that he would just as soon not need: he much prefers cutting through to the heart of a situation. While he is sensitive to the needs of others, he has a well developed self-preservation instinct that allows him to quickly adapt to a strange locale or culture — a skill that has saved his neck on more than one occasion.

Like most writers, he is consumed with curiosity, and when the *Travellers' Digest* journalism contest was held again in 1098, he was among the first to apply. His piece was entitled "The Imperial Frontier: The Next Millenium". In it, he discussed the spinward frontier sectors of Deneb, Spinward Marches, Trojan Reach, and Reft as well as their role in shaping the growth of the Imperium in the next 1,000 years. On 258-1099, he received the announcement that he had won the coveted *Travellers' Digest* Touring Award.

Akidda has been travelling and submitting articles of his travels for over seven years.

Roleplaying Notes: Akidda's strong interview skill indicates he has a real nose for a good story: to play him otherwise would be untrue to his character. His natural curiosity makes him likely to pursue "trouble" rather than run from it.

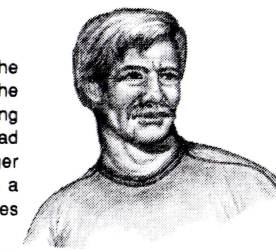
The counterbalance to Akidda's tendency to seek out such trouble is his streetwise skill, which enables him to lessen the harmful results of an otherwise awkward situation. His streetwise skill may enable him to "stumble" onto a valuable source of information the others would overlook.

Keeping this in mind, the referee should use the NPCs encountered by Akidda as those with the most valuable information to the group, as a result of Akidda's abilities. Akidda's phenomenal interview-5 skill gives him tremendous insight when dealing with people.

DUR TELEMON, EX-SCOUT

STATS:
A7A85B age 44 6 terms Cr10,000
Auto Pistol-3, Survival-2, Pilot-1, Grav Vehicle-1, Engineer-1, Gambling-1, Brawling-1, Computer-1, Vacc Suit-0
Auto Pistol
Starport A, Large, Dense Atm, Wet, High Pop, Mod Law, High Stellar
Born: 038-1068

Position: Ex-Scout (on reserve status).



Dur Telemon was *born* into the Scout Service. His father was in the Scout Service while Dur was growing up, and both of his grandfathers had served in the Scouts in their younger days. Dur enjoyed nothing more as a boy than to sit and listen to their tales of adventure.

The Fourth Frontier War broke out when Dur was a teenager — his father's service in the war was a source of pride for the entire family and deepened Dur's love for the Scouts.

Dur's individualistic nature meshed well with his duties in the Exploration Office of the Scout Service. In his first term, a "routine" mapping expedition on Pannet/Rhylanor suddenly turned into a hostage rescue operation, and it was then that Dur happened to save Dr. Krenstein's life. Neither of them is overly emotional about it, but it was that initial chance encounter that grew into a respect and friendship between the two men over the years.

Dur's second and third terms were spent in District 268 and Five Sisters Subsectors doing various planetary surface and orbital surveys. During these surveys, Dur learned much about staying alive and living off the land in unusual environments. Halfway through his fourth term, he was transferred from his field post in the Exploration Branch to a bureaucratic position in Fleet Support.

Dur has resigned from the Scouts and has been travelling with his uncle, Akidda Laagiir.

Roleplaying Notes: Dur is the brash adventurer of the group and as such he is the least likely to fear physical confrontations or physical discomfort. He is also the most likely of the group to act without giving due consideration to the consequences. He has genuine concern for others and is the most likely to risk his life to save someone.

DR. THEODOR KRENSTEIN, SCIENTIST

STATS:
485FCB age 68 12 terms Cr 300,000
Robotics-5, Leader-3, Electronics-2, JOT-2, Laser Rifle-1, Grav Vehicle-1, Medical-1, Mechanical-1
Hand Computer (TL15), Electronic Tool Kit,
Robot AB-101
Starport A, Small, Vacuum Atm, Wet, High Pop, Mod Law, High Stellar
Born: 173-1043

Position: Graz Redniz Chair of Computational Robotics at Rhylanor Institute of Technology — on sabbatical leave.

Dr. Theodor Krensteim is a gifted, multi-talented scientist, with interests from anthropology and archaeology to xenology and zoology, including most of the "ologies" inbetween.

Born on the planet Rhylanor, he entered the Rhylanor Institute of Technology at the age of eighteen, eventually receiving advanced degrees in computer science and roboticsl. He went on to serve three terms as Dean of the School of Robotic Science at RIT, after which he was appointed to the Graz Redniz Chair of Computaational Robotics, a prestigious and coveted position He is the author of 12 holocrystal publications and over 100 articles in technical and scientific journals, in addition to holding more than 250 Imperial military patents for his inventions and robotics work. Despite his academic success, he has become bored with what he has been doing, and realizing his age, took an extended sabbatical from teaching in order to make forays through Deneb Sector.

Among his many pursuits, Dr. Krenstein has aided the Scouts in developing robots for planetary surface surveys. During a test in 1090 on Pannet/Rhylanor, members of a disgruntled anti-technist group kidnaped Dr. Krenstein and threatened to kill him if the Scout Service didn't meet their demands. A young Scout named Dur Telemon was part of the all-volunteer raiding team that finally freed Dr. Krenstein; in fact, Dur was the first to reach the doctor.

After this incident, the doctor constructed his servant, bodyguard and experiment in synaptic learning, "Aybee".

Dr. Krenstein has been travelling with Dur Telemon and Akidda Laagiir since their chance meeting twelve years ago.

Roleplaying Notes: Dr. Krenstein, the "Mr. Fix-it" of the group, contributes valuable analytical skills. Together with Aybee, the doctor may contribute unusual insights Dur or even Akidda might otherwise overlook.

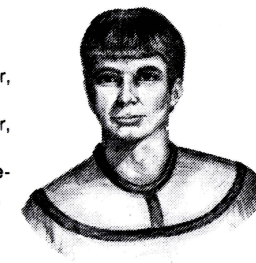
The doctor is slightly mischievous in the manner in which he conceals Aybee's true robotic nature — a source of much fun if roleplayed completely. The doctor seeks new experiences and knowledge for both his robot and himself, so he will pursue adventure suggestions readily.

Keep the doctor's age in mind — he is the least able of the group physically, although Aybee helps to make up for this.

AYBEE WAN OWEN

APPARENT STATS:
8D9C7B age 19 0 terms Cr 0
Medical-1, Linguistics-1, Grav Vehicle-1, Laser Welder-1
Starport A, Small, Vacuum Atm, Wet, High Pop, Mod Law, High Stellar
Born: 049-1081

Actual Pseudobiological Robot Profile:
Constructed in 1091 by Dr. Theodor Krenstein
561x2-A2-PM327-FDC7(J) Cr11,970,600 319kg
Fuel=78.1 Duration=21.7 TL=15
7/17 (Jack)
Head (10%), 2 Lt arms
2 Eyes (+1 light intens), 2 ears, voder, touch sensors
Pwr int, brain int, TL 15 holo recorder, Lt laser welder
Medical-1, Linguistics-1, Grav Vehicle-1, Valet-1, Laser Welder-1, Rescue-1, Emotion Simulation



Position: Personal servant and protégé of Dr. Krenstein.

AB-101, or "Aybee", is a pseudobiological robot designed and constructed by Dr. Krenstein. Aybee's apparent UPP is what Dr. Krenstein wishes Aybee to project to others based upon his programming (he is actually capable of much greater values); his intelligence and education are estimated from his computer hardware and software; and his social class is based upon his position as a knight.

Although Aybee's programming gives him certain basic abilities, he lacks true artificial intelligence and thus can make errors in judgment; in abstract situations, this effectively lowers his true skill level. Aybee's "weapon" is a light laser welder, built into his right arm. Many Imperial worlds specify standards for robot-installed weapons, and Dr. Krenstein has designed Aybee so that his arm (ostensibly used only as a tool) can pass inspection by officials, since laser welders are generally not restricted by local law levels; however, voice override controls allow Dr. Krenstein to use Aybee as a weapon at short range.

Roleplaying Notes: Without a doubt, Aybee is the most unusual of the quartet. He is also the most difficult to roleplay effectively.

Strangers who find out that Aybee is a robot may react negatively (increase the difficulty of any interpersonal task one level). Most will never suspect from casual observation that Aybee is nothing but a machine.

To determine Aybee is a robot at close (1.5m) range:
Difficult, Robotics, Interview, 2 min
Referee: Roll once during the first encounter. Thereafter roll daily if the character constantly spends extended periods of time near Aybee. Otherwise, ignore this task — there is no chance for detection.

Aybee's power plant is a closed hydrogen/open oxygen fuel cell. Aybee carries his own hydrogen supply, but the hydrogen is oxidized by oxygen from the air. Aybee is thus much like a true human in this respect — if he loses his oxygen supply, his power plant will not function. After an accident at the Shudusham Robotics Conference, Krenstein installed a half-hour supply of oxygen for emergencies. Aybee's fuel cell produces a harmless waste by-product which must be eliminated from time to time: pure water.

One Last Stop

ADVENTURE NUMBER 21
—by Gary L. Thomas

INTRODUCTION

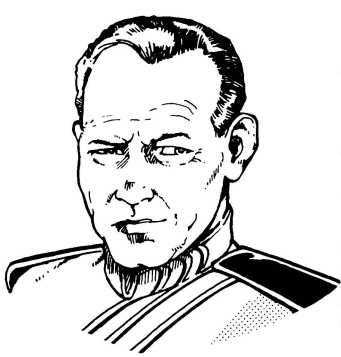
This adventure takes place at an unpublicized Ancient site in the Spinward Marches, where the four characters conclude their travels through the Imperium by discovering some rather unusual artifacts — and a plot to seize them.

Dates: All dates in this adventure correspond to the Imperial calendar. The starting date of this adventure is 115-1112.

Place: The adventure begins aboard the *Telos*, a common Imperial transport en route to Pixie (Spinward Marches 1903), a small vacuum world at the border of the Imperium.

Non-Player Characters

Suuta Beganaadi, Naval commodore



A96BB9 age 54 9 terms
Cr90,000

Admin-4, Leader-4, Ship Tactics-3, Laser Pistol-2, Engineering-1, Vacc Suit-1

Starport A, Large, Std Atm, Wet, Mod Pop, Mod Law, Average Stellar

Commodore Beganaadi epitomizes the career Naval officer: tough, no-nonsense, but patient enough to put up with a lot of red tape when necessary. The commodore is not a favorite with the crew of the Pixie orbital station, but he is well respected for his forthright leadership — his personnel always know where he stands.

Samuel Davidson, ex-Scout

B94896 age 41 6 terms
Cr18,000

Sensor Ops-4, Computer-3, Electronics-2, Gravitics-2, Carousing-1, Pilot-1

Starport C, Asteroid, Vacuum, Desert, Mod, High Law, High Stellar

Samuel Davidson — he insists that his friends call him "Sammy" — is a densitometer expert at the Pixie Ancient site. He is friendly and well liked by those he works with.

Marya Vandertal, scientist

769FD8 age 37 5 terms
Cr6,000

Engineering-4, Gravitics-4, Computer-1

Starport A, Small, Std Atm, Dry, Mod Pop, Low Law, High Stellar

Marya Vandertal, despite her young age, holds two doctorate degrees from the Rhylanor Institute of Technology, where Dr. Krenstein is a professor of robotics. She knows Krenstein's reputation well, although she has never met him. Dr. Vandertal has an impish sense of humor, part of a defense mechanism to keep away suitors who are interested more in her beauty than in her brains.

Gregor Patram, scientist/physician

596BF8 age 61 11 terms
Cr235,000

Medical-4, History-3, Biology-2, Chemistry-2, Computer-2, Instruction-1, Liaison-1

Starport B, Large, Std Atm, Dry, Low Pop, Low Law, Average Stellar

Dr. Gregor Patram, besides being a physician, is a self-taught student of the mystery of the Ancients. His study of the available literature has resulted in two books, one written for a popular audience, the other well received within the academic community. His medical specialties are radiation sickness and biochemical means to treat it.

REFEREE'S SUMMARY OF NUGGETS

How to Play Aybee is a sidebar to be read by Aybee's player before the adventure starts.

What Is Generally Believed about the Ancients is a sidebar to be read by all the players before the adventure starts.

1. A Passage from Aybee's Diary is the opening monologue, which introduces the characters to the situation aboard the *Telos*.

2. The World of Pixie gives library data on the world.

3. A Refreshing Nap: The characters wake up from their suspended state to discover that Aybee has diverted their route to what he thinks is an Ancient site.

4. Where In Tarnation? Aybee tries to explain, but his memory fails him.

5. Open-Door Policy — or Revolving Door? The characters try to find out more about this supposed Ancient site by talking to Commodore Beganaadi.

6. What's Really Going on Here? Wandering around the orbital base, the characters pick up rumors from Naval personnel.

7. A Short Side Trip: The characters travel to the surface of Pixie in search of clues, where they are met by Commodore Beganaadi and told about the secret Ancient site.

8. What Have We Here? Travelling deep underground, the characters get their first look at some of the Ancient artifacts that have been found on Pixie.

9. Trouble Above: A Vargr ship, possibly in league with the Zhodani Consulate, enters the system and is captured by Naval forces.

10. And What's This? The characters are given an opportunity to experiment with another Ancient artifact, which they find can move physical objects from place to place.

11. Visitors from the Past: While playing with the artifacts, the characters manage to summon up aliens that were evidently put into suspension 300,000 years ago.

12. Tick Tock, Tick Tock, Tick Tock: While exploring the tunnels, the characters discover and disarm a bomb, evidently set by Zhodani in order to destroy the Pixie Ancient site.

13. Friends or Enemies, Teachers or Students? After the Ancient aliens have been revived from their suspended state, the characters have a chance to try to communicate with them.

14. An Unwelcome Visitation: Aybee has a nightmare that he is being attacked by Zhodani.

15. More Secrets in the Tunnels of the Ancients: The characters discover that someone is stealing the Ancient artifacts from the Pixie site.

16. Can Aybee Save the Day? Aybee suffers another memory failure in the heat of the moment, and is shot down by the thieves.

17. The Last Leg of the Trip: Locked in a store room with a bomb about to go off, the characters must escape, save Pixie, and recover the stolen artifacts.

18. Tying Up Loose Ends: concludes the 21-part **Traveller** campaign begun in Issue 1 of the *Travellers' Digest*.

1. A PASSAGE FROM AYBEE'S DIARY
Aybee's Opening Monologue
Location is onboard the starship *Telos*

I've finally identified this feeling that I've had for the last few weeks — it's loneliness. The doc and the other two guys are in suspension, and it just isn't the same without them around to talk to, particularly with all the changes I am experiencing lately.

Like this diary, for example. The doc designed me to have "the latest state-of-the-art robotic brain" — he's fond of saying that — but lately I seem to be forgetting more and more things. I was fluent in Gvegh a few years ago, and vaguely remember chatting with Vargr at the time, but now that's all gone from my memory. There are also strange gaps, entire worlds that I know we must have visited, but which I can't recall at all.

So that's why I started this diary. Krenstein wanted me to keep one ever since the changes started coming on, and so I do keep one — for his lab notebook. But this one is mine, my personal diary, where I can record *all* my thoughts and feelings, and nobody else has to read it, do they?

The doc is sure that my "new attitude" was caused by the Hivers. When they repaired me at Shudusham, Krenstein believes that they somehow started some kind of programming in the part of my brain that's mainly synaptic (that's the breakthrough that the doc designed me for, to use more synaptic processing), and "things have never been the same since", as they say. The doc is furious about it — not because he's upset with what's going on, but because he doesn't know what the Hivers did, and so he can't reproduce it in the laboratory. But whatever it was, the doc says that it has pushed me over the brink of true artificial intelligence. I am the first of my kind.

And it's fun, in its own way. Every day things are a little different. I no longer am able to access my emotion simulation software, but thanks to the Hivers I find I don't really need it any more. It's disturbing, sometimes, to suddenly have things "feel" different — I don't really know how to describe it, I guess — but usually if I think about the situation I can figure out what's going on. Evidently, the Hiver software has reorganized my deepest knowledge, the stuff in my synaptic memory that isn't directly accessible, and every once in a while something happens to trigger one of those memories, and then I suddenly feel happy, or sad, or angry — and today I'm lonely.

I'm still a baby, emotionally, and I have to investigate each new feeling to figure out what it is and whether I like it. I think I'm driving Dur crazy, the way I act sometimes, but I think it's pretty funny.

The doc was a little concerned when I first started noticing my emotions. He permanently disconnected the laser welder that he built into my right arm. He said, "You're becoming a real man now, Aybee, and real men don't carry weapons among their friends." He tried to make it sound like another aspect of my growth, but I didn't believe a word of it. I think he's just afraid that I might lose control and start shooting people. I just nodded my head, though, and said, "Thanks, Dr. Krenstein. I appreciate the new confidence you have in me." I tried to sound sincere, too, but I noticed that Akidda looked at me funny, as though he didn't believe me.

And tiredness — now there's a new feeling! This one the doc doesn't understand at all, but I suddenly have a need for sleep. He thinks it has something to do with the way my brain reorganizes itself, and that my ability to focus consciously is lost while this goes on, but whatever it is, it takes some getting used to. The first few times it happened, I didn't know what was going on, and I shut down pretty suddenly. Falling over without warning can be dangerous if you're a robot massing over 300 kilos. The doc had a lot of explaining to do when the ship's steward found a berth ripped loose from the wall.

But that's not the strangest part of it. I dream! This is still the part that seems most foreign to me. When I regain consciousness, I can sometimes recall these dreams, and they seem totally absurd then. So why are they so real while I'm asleep? I find myself doing things that I would never do in real life, but it seems like the right thing to do in the dream.

Anyway, I expect my loneliness to end in only a few days, when we reach Pixie and the guys are revived. The Aslan situation had finally quieted down, and we didn't feel as though we were being chased across the galaxy, but we ran short on money. Sure, the doc's got plenty, but he couldn't get to it with the disruptions caused by the end of the Fifth Frontier War, so we suddenly found ourselves travelling "in less spacious accommodations", as Akidda put it.

For the other three guys, that meant low berths. Krenstein was afraid to shut me down, because he didn't know what might happen with my new software running. Besides, the whole idea scared me. Anyway, we only had a few jumps before reaching Rhylanor, so everyone thought things would be all right.

Luckily for them, I'm the kind of guy who keeps both ears open — so I found an opportunity I knew they wouldn't want to pass up. It seems that Pixie is an Ancient site, but it's so important that the Navy hasn't announced this publicly. Never mind how I heard about it, but when I did, I knew the guys wouldn't regret one last stop. Since the war with the Zho is long over now, I figure we'll be safe enough, even though Pixie is on the border of the Imperium.

It was easy wrangling an invitation. I just told the Navy guys who we were, and what we had accomplished at the Ancient site on Antiquity. The rest was easy. The low berths were transferred over to the *Telos*, and a couple months later we're almost there. Won't the guys be surprised when they find out? I can hardly wait.

2. THE WORLD OF PIXIE
Player Characters' Background
Library data available from any computer terminal

Pixie (Spinward Marches 1903 A100103-D) is a small planetoid at the very edge of the Imperium. The planetoid itself is virtually uninhabited, being possessed of no natural resources to speak of. The only object of real interest in the system is the Pixie Naval Base, an orbital facility circling Pixie.

Pixie has no atmosphere nor hydrosphere; astrophysical evidence does not indicate that it ever had either one. The IISS Second Survey confirmed reports of early mining operations. The miners found no ores worth excavating.

Pixie Naval Base has a class-A starport available for emergency civilian use; travel to the system is otherwise discouraged because of recent hostilities with the Zhodani Consulate.

Referee: Does this sound boring? Does this sound unappealing? That's how the Imperium wants it to sound. As skimpy and useless as this library data is, it is all that the characters will be able to get with standard services, even after waking from suspension at Pixie Naval Base. Details of the base's personnel and operations have not been available since the start of the Fifth Frontier War. News reports, also few and far between, have not mentioned any specific hostilities in the Pixie system, although nearby Kenorb was the scene of considerable action.

3. A REFRESHING NAP
PCs wake up from suspension
Location is onboard the starship *Telos*

Scene: A sudden bright light invades your consciousness as awareness returns. You feel stiff and sore, and it takes you more than a few seconds to realize where you are and why this stranger is bent over you.

Action: The three human characters have been in suspension for several months, moved from ship to ship in their low berths by Aybee's request. They are now waking up in the sickbay in the orbital Pixie Naval Base.

Before starting this nugget, ask the players to specify the order in which Aybee would have been instructed to wake his companions. If you wish to make the players sweat, have something go mildly wrong with one of the arousals. Use appropriate tasks for this from the article on suspension found elsewhere in this issue.

You can use any generic off-the-shelf physician for this scene; save Dr. Patram until the characters travel to Pixie itself. The characters will probably not want to trust their safety to their own low levels of medical skill.

4. WHERE IN TARNATION?
The characters find out they're not on Rhylanor
Location is onboard the starship *Telos*

Scene: "Aybee, perhaps you misunderstood what we said. I thought..."

HOW TO PLAY AYBEE

In this adventure, the changes that started to take place several issues ago are finally coming to their full fruition in Aybee's character. Designed as the most "lifelike" robot in history, tampering with Aybee's software has created in him true artificial intelligence. This means that Aybee's player must also change the way that Aybee acts from now on.

Aybee is not a supercomputer, nor is he a "purely logical alien" without any emotions. But he is a machine, and his growing self-awareness is something that he has never had to deal with before.

You are encouraged to have as much fun with this as you desire, doing your best to worry the other players when you think the action might be slowing down. Your memory is spotty, and from time to time the referee in this adventure might tell you specific things that you have forgotten about your past.

Your new emotions are another cause for concern. If you have been playing this character for the last five years, you are used to "pretending" to be emotional under appropriate circumstances. Now you get to wear the shoe on the other foot. When a normal human would feel an emotion, Aybee is likely to feel it. However, he is uncomfortable with his emotions, and his reaction is often to stop and ponder his inner state, rather than to act as he otherwise would. Sometimes his emotions are just inappropriate, too — an occasional "Oh, that's too bad" or "Hey, this is great" from you can really spice up this adventure — particularly if you say these things at the wrong times. Just don't overdo it or some of the sense of wonder will be lost.

Your need to sleep also appears for the first time in this adventure. In one nugget, this will play a significant part — the referee will warn you ahead of time of what you need to do.

In the past, you have had an almost photographic memory. You could store three-dimensional images up to 10 minutes after you experienced them, and then convert those "memories" to two-dimensional form for permanent storage in your memory bank. These could later be "data dumped" to Dr. Krenstein's hand computer via a specially-made cable. None of this is true any longer. Your memories of things work much as a regular human's would. You can recall things in 3D, in a way, much as an ordinary person can "picture a scene" in his mind, but you have nowhere near the photographic detail that you once had. You can no longer skim through a library data entry and later recite it word for word. Nor can you provide any data dumps to Dr. Krenstein. Your synaptic processing seems to have taken over your normal memory capabilities. •

Action: Aybee's player will need a little pre-coaching to survive this scene, in which he is grilled by his companions. The humans thought they were travelling to Rhylanor in suspension, and are understandably perturbed when they wake up in a Naval station. Once the attending personnel have left, Aybee is free to speak.

Unfortunately, he has a memory gap concerning how he found out about the supposed Ancient site at Pixie, but he does know that he got the proper paperwork to ship the humans' low berths to the system. Pixie was not notified ahead of time that the characters were coming, so they are not expected, but Aybee hopes that the Navy will appreciate the presence of such distinguished explorers.

The Ancient site, Aybee knows, is classified, and it is entirely probable that most of the Naval personnel are unaware of it. The best suggestion that any of the characters should come up with is to arrange a meeting with the commanding officer and ask him to explain what's going on.

5. OPEN-DOOR POLICY — OR REVOLVING DOOR?

Commodore Beganaadi stonewalls

Location is Pixie orbital naval base

Scene: It was simple enough for you to arrange an audience with Commodore Suuta Beganaadi, who is in charge of all activities in the Pixie system. Your credentials as knights of the Imperium would have been sufficient, even without your reputations "behind the claw" — your group includes a prominent research scientist as well as a widely read journalist.

Action: Commodore Beganaadi is a no-nonsense individual, and everything about him makes that apparent. His office is spartan, with a minimum of furnishings and virtually nothing on his polished desktop. His personal appearance is also somewhat severe, with a short haircut showing his allegiance to traditional Navy ways.

Unfortunately, he has bad news for the characters. He has no knowledge of any Ancient site on Pixie, and he regrets that the party has travelled so far out of their way on nothing more than a wild goose chase. Certainly, if there were an Ancient site here, he would know about it.

As for Pixie itself, it is a dead, useless world. There are minimal landing facilities there operated by the Navy, as well as a handful of miners who are too stupid to realize that they are wasting their energies fruitlessly, looking for minerals that just aren't there.

The players, knowing that we would not have brought them to Pixie for nothing, should be quite suspicious by now, and are likely not to believe the Commodore. If they want to roll a task to find out whether or not he is lying, make up an uncertain task, roll your dice behind the screen, and whatever you and the players roll, tell them that something is wrong here but that the characters can't tell what it is.

Eventually, any players worth their salt should insist on the party's making their own investigative journey to Pixie's surface. The Commodore reluctantly agrees to this, although he says that the characters are wasting their time. The impression should be that he is allowing this because of their knighthood and reputations: he really has no way, after all, to find out on such short notice just how influential these four might be.

By the way, no weapons of any kind will be allowed to be taken to Pixie. This is a standard Naval operating procedure, but it will nevertheless make the characters nervous — and that's just fine.

6. WHAT'S REALLY GOING ON HERE?

Useless rumors and red herrings

Location is Pixie orbital naval base

Scene: Wandering around, you have several opportunities to chat with Naval personnel.

WHAT IS GENERALLY BELIEVED ABOUT THE ANCIENTS

The ancients have been so widely discussed in MegaTraveller literature that it seems important to say a few words about them, from the character's point of view.

Remember that none of the characters are players. They have never heard of the MegaTraveller game, they do not know how to roll a task, and they have never read GDW's *Secret of the Ancients* or *Alien Module 5: The Droyne*. They have never heard of "Grandfather", and in general they know as little about the Ancients as any college-educated member of the Imperium would know.

So what *do* they know? There are numerous divergent theories about who the Ancients were, but this much is fact: a little under a hundred worlds in the Imperium contain relics and artifacts which archaeologists are able to date as being from a time about 300,000 years ago. These "artifacts" show evidence of a technology higher than anything developed by any of the known races inhabiting the area around the Imperium.

Unfortunately, these artifacts also point to a devastatingly destructive holocaust, which apparently killed all members of this mysterious race. Who might the Ancients have been? While the high technology and similar geologic dating point to a single race, the diversity of artifacts makes it difficult to do much more than speculate about what this race might have been like. It is generally assumed that they were upright and bipedal — that is, with two legs, because they used servants of this type.

Servants? Indeed, the Ancients have been credited with dispersing humans (from their homeworld of Terra) to over 40 other planets, particularly Vland and Zhdant. There is also an accumulated body of evidence that says that the Vargr were genetically created by the Ancients from Terran canine stock. In addition, the Ancient site on Antiquity included a more or less pseudobiological robot Droyne. (This robot further fueled the sophontological speculation in recent years that the Droyne were genetically created from Chirpers.)

What these members of other species were used for is unknown. •

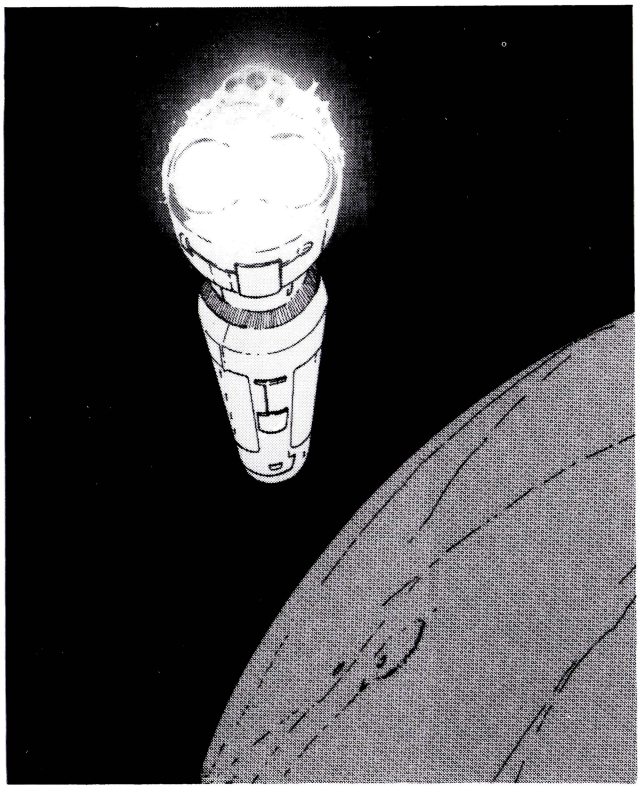
Action: This nugget can be put anywhere desired, to spoonfeed the characters with various rumors and opinions. The second rumor below is the only important one, and should be given well before any contact with the Vargr ship (in Nugget 9) or knowledge of the Zhodani sabotage (in Nugget 12).

Rumor 1: The Naval Base would be the ideal place to work if only it had more female personnel assigned to it (said by a young male lieutenant with overactive hormones).

Rumor 2: Even though the war is over, the Naval Base is still on full alert for any signs of fleeing hostile combatants.

Rumor 3: During the war, there were some food shipments that were accidentally diverted from the base, and unpleasant stories of insufficient (and tasteless besides) rations are still told.

Rumor 4: Once the Imperium is positive that the Zhodani are no longer a threat, the Pixie Naval Base will be shut down, with its personnel transferred to other bases in the Spinward Marches.



7. A SHORT SIDE TRIP
The PCs travel to Pixie's surface
Location is the Ancient site on the surface of Pixie

Scene: A Naval shuttle has been loaded with any supplies that you have requested, including four comfortably fitting vacc suits. You board the shuttle, don the suits, and start toward the surface of the small planetoid below.

Once on the surface, you land near a small cluster of buildings on a vacuum plain. Towering overhead is a nearby mountain range. In the distance toward the mountains you can see a flat, irregular area apparently inlaid with a mosaic of metallic bars.

Action: The group is led to a small building. There is a considerable amount of heavy grav equipment in this area, as well as a few dozen transport vessels of various sizes.

Once inside the building, the group is greeted by a smiling, affable Commodore Beganaadi, who immediately apologizes for the "runaround" that he had to give the characters aboard the orbital station. Official policy of the Navy is not to discuss the Ancient site there, and he hopes the characters will understand. The commodore turns the group over to Dr. Marya Vandertal, who is more than happy to give them a briefing on the progress being made while the group travels deep underground in an elevator car.

If you desire, you can keep the party on their toes (and give them a taste of Dr. Vandertal's sense of humor) by staging an elevator "accident". The car itself travels on rails, so it should be safe, but Dr. Vandertal warns that a blue light on the car's controls will glow if anything is wrong. About halfway down the shaft, a slight tremor is felt, and the light starts blinking. Dr. Vandertal panics, screams that everyone is going to die, and in general carries on in such a way as to scare the party out of their wits. In fact, the tremor just marks the halfway point and a switching to a second set of rails, which allows two different cars to travel up and down at the same time. The blue light is another indicator of the switchover, and has nothing to do with a danger signal. Once Dr. Vandertal gets what enjoyment she can out of the party's helpless anguish, she laughs and explains that this practical joke is pulled on all first-time visitors to the site.

The surface Ancient site was discovered several centuries ago during the First Survey. Only in the last decade has the further subsurface artifacts been discovered. There has been absolutely no publicity about the site, beccause Pixie has several unusual aspects about it, and scientists wanted time to study the world in detail.

What is especially unusual about Pixie is that the core of the world evidently has something contained deep within it — believed to be an artificial gravity field of some kind — that throws densitometer readings completely off the scale. (This is common even with our own grav plates and other artificial gravity equipment; see *World Builder's Handbook* for details on densitometer operation. For an entire world to have this effect is another matter entirely, however.)

Having undetectable densitometer readings was a two-edged sword: it made the discovery of the site possible, but at the same time made it impossible to know any details of it. The Navy proceeded with one of the deepest space mining operations ever attempted — 800 km straight down to the core of Pixie.

The mining operation has not been without its own special hazards. Three different times unknown radiation has suddenly burst from the center of the world, spewing death through the tunnel for a distance of 200 km from the center. No instruments have detected these radiation bursts; the only evidence of them has been dead miners, showing symptoms of radiation poisoning. It is not known what causes these outbursts, nor have they been predictable in the past.

What the miners finally found has been fascinating to Ancient researchers — a network of separated tunnels of an unusual crystalline metal. The tunnels are of such a nature that scientists at the site are divided as to whether the tunnels were grown within the planet, or the planet was grown around the tunnels. In either case, the tunnels are so fragile in some cases that reaching them with an excavation has resulted in their immediate collapse; other tunnels survive without difficulty. The miners and Naval researchers have not been able to discern and difference between the two kinds of tunnels.

The tunnels themselves are almost entirely empty, with marks along their walls that suggest that heavy equipment once lined them, but that lining was later hastily removed. Only a few smaller artifacts have been found, but these are rather interesting, to say the least.

8. WHAT HAVE WE HERE?
The PCs look at the artifacts
Location is the underground Ancient site on Pixie

Scene: After several hours, the elevator car finally reaches the area of the tunnels. The area is pressurized, so vacc suit helmets need not be worn, but they should be kept nearby in case of sudden loss of pressure. Leading you through the tunnels, Dr. Vandertal explains that artifacts that have been found have not been moved away from their original locations. It is not known what their function is, and because of the probability of an Ancient power plant somewhere nearby, the Navy does not want to risk any kind of chain reaction by moving what could very well be Ancient control mechanisms. The artifacts await...

Action: As already mentioned, the various tunnels of the Ancient sight are not interconnected, but the ones that have been found (and that have survived the excavation process) are connected to the central elevator shaft, so that access to any of these can be made, albeit with some inconvenience.

In one of the tunnels, Dr. Vandertal shows the characters an artifact shaped something like an old snake charmer's flute. She puts one end in her mouth, and the characters hear the dulcet tones of a flute. She asks if any of the characters would like to try.

The "flute" itself is about a foot long, hollow inside, with what are apparently fingerholds (not holes) in several places along it. How the device works and what it is capable of are what differentiate it from any other known musical instrument. The character who volunteers to use it may have slight difficulty getting a sound out of it.

There are two requirements to operate the flute: the inside passage of it must be warmer than its outside, and the flute must be held parallel within a foot or two of a person's spinal column. The sound it makes is generated by the musician's thoughts, for this is a psionic instrument.

Have the player describe the actions his character is taking, and if he is blowing softly (to warm the insides) and holding the flute in the proper orientation, ask him what he is thinking of. If it is something that can make a sound, then all the characters nearby hear that sound. (Note that the sound itself is not psionic, but is normal vibrations in the air. The source of these vibrations is not obvious, but is suspected to be the walls of the tunnels themselves.)

In this way, a character can, with this artifact, sound like a trumpet, a clarinet, a guitar, a piano, or any other musical instrument. He can also generate the sounds of several instruments at once — if he thinks of an orchestra playing a symphony, the sounds of the entire orchestra can be heard. What's more, the device is not limited to musical sounds. If the character thinks of a cat — they hear meowing. A cow — the sounds of moos. Emperor Strephon or Archduke Norris making a speech — his voice emanates out from somewhere in the room. Don't hand this information to the players, but let their characters experiment with the device to discover its full functionality.

Such experimentation can lead to danger if an excessively loud sound is thought of. Bombs going off or rockets igniting can temporarily deafen those in the vicinity, and even cause a temporary collapse. (You may find this quite likely to happen. Roll randomly for one or two characters to fall unconscious for a couple of minutes; all will have ringing in their ears for 2D hours afterwards.)

What's more — and Dr. Vandertal will demonstrate this if the characters don't figure it out — the device can be played by more than one person. By standing close by, two or more people can have their thoughts picked up by the "flute", allowing them to harmonize sounds in pleasant — or unpleasant, as the case may be — ways.

Several of these "flutes" have been found at this site.

9. TROUBLE ABOVE
The PCs hear of a Vargr ship in system
Location is on the world of Pixie

Scene: *Time, place, and circumstances at discretion of referee.*

Action: A Vargr ship comes into system, refuses to identify itself, and is captured by the Navy after a short battle. The ship normally holds a crew of eight, but has only four Vargr aboard. Circumstantial evidence points to this ship as having cooperated with the Zhodani in the recent war, but the Vargr refuse to admit to anything.

The purpose of this nugget is to put doubt in the minds of the players. Is it possible for Zhodani (psionic) personnel to have gained access to the Pixie system, and perhaps its Ancient site? Later these suspicions, on the part of the

characters, will build to a climactic surprise ending, but for now you will probably find that your players are eager to swallow this possibility hook, line, and sinker. Encourage it in any way you feel appropriate. If the characters even desire to travel back to the orbital station to interview the Vargr personally, this could be arranged.

How and when should you introduce this nugget? As for time, let this fact be known early enough that it provides a natural buildup with the other "Zhodani activity" nuggets, while at the same time serving as a counterpoint to the Ancient site investigation nuggets, which are the main thread of this adventure.

If one or more of the characters are on the surface of Pixie (perhaps going for a walk to clear one's head), the ship-to-ship battle could be witnessed, and natural curiosity on the part of the character will cause him to ask Naval personnel for a fuller explanation. Otherwise, you might allow a site alarm to sound, warning of hostile presence in the system, or just drop the fact in conversation with base personnel.

10. AND WHAT'S THIS?
The characters see the second artifact
Location is in the underground Ancient site on Pixie

Scene: In another tunnel, Dr. Vandertal shows the characters another group of artifacts, the purpose of which is unknown by the researchers. The artifacts consist of strangely familiar shapes of metal, some matching in size with wooden forms that seem to fit inside. (These things are hard to describe in words — your best bet is to show the players the picture in this article.) Up and down, the metal sculptures are about half a meter in length; across they are about two-thirds this size. Along the rim are a number of colorful, gemlike stones. Whatever it is that these artifacts do, the Naval researchers have discovered that they throw densitometer readings off the scale.

Action: We are now getting much closer to the "meat" of this adventure — these artifacts are keys to an incredible revelation about who the Ancients were.

The characters are bound to want to experiment with these things, and their experience with the sound generators should give them several clues about the new "toys". Are these psionically operated? Yes. Does their orientation with respect to their user make a big difference? Yes. The trick is to let the players feel as though they are solving this puzzle on their own. To operate these, one had to hold the crosspieces, one in each hand, and then hold the large round hole up against the person's face. If your players aren't clever — or persistent — let another mode of operation succeed before they entirely give up. (This may be a place for you to insert one of the nuggets concerning possible Zhodani activity in this region, allowing the characters to try their luck with these artifacts again later in the course of play.)

To properly operate these artifacts, what the character is thinking is important, but here again you must be relatively lax in what you allow to ultimately succeed. Once the characters get one of these to work the first time, you can be gradually stricter about their operation. There is never any need for the characters to have total control over the device — after all, they are not as psionically talented as were the Ancients, nor have they been trained in how to use these devices.

So what do the devices do? If you have read GDW's *Secret of the Ancients*, or the "Ancients" referee's entry in the *Imperial Encyclopedia*, then you know that Grandfather, the original progenitor of the Ancients, "left" this universe by "pinching off" a pocket universe and entering it. (Such a feat is perhaps the most impressive demonstration of the technological marvels that the Ancients were able to achieve.)

These artifacts pinch off *personal* pocket universes, creating and filling them on the fly, and allowing the possessor of the artifact at a later time to retrieve whatever was placed in the small, temporary universe. The first time a character holds the artifact properly (whatever you determine "properly" to mean) and thinks of "opening", "getting", "moving", "having" — anything close to these ideas — a flash of light will appear and the objects currently in that device's pocket universe will appear a few feet in front of the character.

Only one pocket universe can belong to a single artifact at a time. Thus, thinking in one way will create the universe and move the object thought of into it (with a corresponding flash of light); using the artifact again — with a similar pattern of thought — will retrieve the object. The Ancients used these for temporary storage, as well as for easy short-distance transport of large, bulky objects.

If you have any spare ideas for Ancient artifacts that you have been wanting to spring on your players, you could introduce these here, as items that are contained in some of these pocket universes. Don't let the characters play with these too much, though: eventually you will want to move on to the next nugget — you could even use it on the very first artifact tried with some minor adjustment to the wording.

11. VISITORS FROM THE PAST

The PCs encounter the "Ancients"

Location is in the underground Ancient site on Pixie

Scene: Holding another of these artifacts in the same way as you held the others, and concentrating in the same fashion that seemed to work before, you suddenly see a flash of light before you. When your eyes adjust, you see the bodies of four creatures lying in front of you, creatures such as you have never seen before! The creatures are covered with red and yellow mottled fur and have two short, stumpy legs. One of their most notable features are their arms: two sets of two, with the spindlier, longer arms a few inches above the more muscular ones. Despite their unusual nature, the bodies show evidence of some careful plan — all four are identical to each other.

Action: These bodies are not lifeless corpses, but this fact should not be immediately apparent to the characters. The creatures are in suspension, one developed by the Ancients that required no special chamber. This suspended state was specially developed to allow living creatures to use the personal pocket universes: to go into one otherwise is to court a slow and painful death (another good reason not to let your player characters try too many "successful" experiments with the artifacts!).

Let the characters spend some time examining these "bodies", perhaps with the assistance of Dr. Vandertal or another of the Naval personnel at the site. Drop as many hints as you feel necessary: "the bodies are very cold", then later "the bodies are a little warmer, by the way, but the skin tone isn't as attractive as it was", and so on. If your players are particularly dense (or if you're particularly heartless), you could just let all four of these "Ancients" die without proper resuscitation techniques, and let the characters find four more later with another artifact.

Otherwise, make the characters roll on the following task for each alien creature.

To reanimate one of the alien creatures:
Formidable, Medical, Edu, 2 hours (fateful)

Referee: Without proper medical facilities (such as those found in the Naval command center near the surface of Pixie), this task is bound to fail. You can allow "free time" for the characters to load the bodies into the elevator and transport them to the surface if you wish. Otherwise, the fateful nature of the task will kill the aliens, and you will have to allow the characters to retrieve four more from a different personal pocket universe. The characters will benefit from Dr. Patram's medical expertise in this task.

The aliens themselves are mute, and even if they could speak upon being revived they would not understand the language spoken in the Third Imperium. In any case, they need rest, and if the characters do not suggest it, Dr. Patram will insist on it, allowing time to pass while the characters do more exploring on their own, or sleep.

12. TICK TOCK, TICK TOCK, TICK TOCK

The characters find a Zhodani bomb

Location is in the underground Ancient site on Pixie

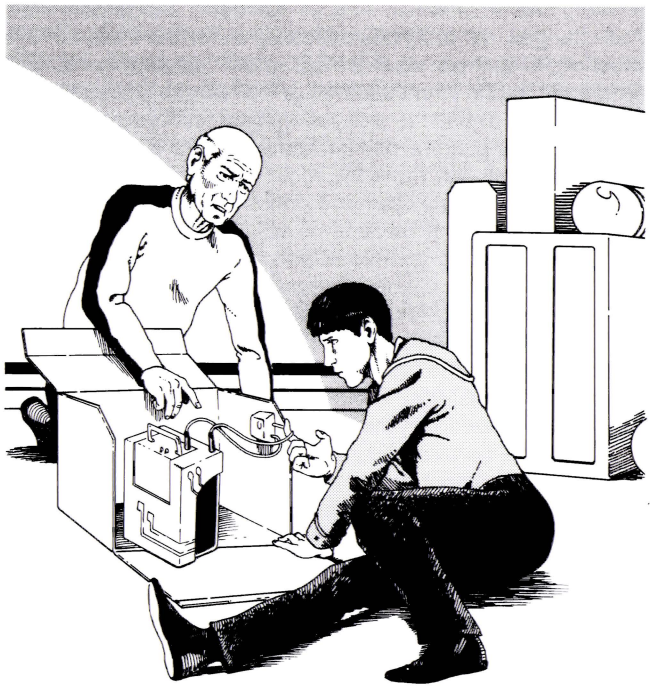
Scene: Walking down one of the tunnels of the Ancient site, you come across a small box that seems somehow out of place. It is a general rule of the archaeological expedition that things be left in as natural a condition as possible. Still, something is wrong here...

Action: The best way to develop this scene is to have each player character roll two dice for a "blind task", *i.e.*, the players do not know what they are rolling against.

To notice the box as out of place:
Difficult, Admin or Streetwise, Int, instant

Referee: As mentioned above, this is a "blind task". Have each player roll, without telling them what they are trying to do; any who succeed should be told that they notice this box as not having been there before, and that something seems funny about it. If no players succeed, give the information to the one who comes closest to success.

Inside the box is a fair amount of plastique and a detonator of unusual design and with alien markings. Any member of the party should be able to tell immediately that this device is of Zhodani manufacture. There are no buttons or dials on the detonator itself — it is designed to be operated by "flicking", psionically turning it on from a distance when desired.



If you have been carefully building up the suspicion of Zhodani activity in the Pixie system, this discovery should get the players back on their toes.

Once the Naval authorities are notified, an even greater danger becomes apparent. It is well within the realm of probability that an explosion here could trigger a chain reaction of the Ancient power plant within the bowels of the planet, destroying it entirely along within anyone foolish enough to be on it at the time.

13. FRIENDS OR ENEMIES, TEACHERS OR STUDENTS?

More contact with the aliens

Location is back on surface of Pixie

Scene: The Ancients (or whoever the aliens are) have been sequestered in a sickbay near the surface of Pixie. The characters have had a little experience with alien contact, so they may be able to wrangle an invitation — or at least permission to visit with the aliens!

Action: Initial contact between the humans at Pixie and these aliens has proved fruitless. Several did not survive the reawakening from suspension (as determined by task rolls in Nugget 11 above), and the ones that have survived have not been very informative. For all the attention that they pay to their surroundings, they may as well be autistic.

The characters, after a little role-playing confrontation with the authorities, can have carte blanche — anything they want to try is OK. The aliens will react like newborn babies — blind, deaf, and mute, with no interest in what is going on around them. The key to this situation is to grant the aliens access to a rather important device: the Ancient sound generator.

In fact, the sound generator was the communication tool used by these aliens. Once one of them has one, he (or perhaps she? — not much is known yet about their biology, actually) immediately puts it in his mouth and begins producing a remarkable amount of rhythmic beeps and buzzes, having a semi-musical quality, but nothing like anything the four characters have ever heard before.

The characters can try to reproduce the sounds heard with a sound generator of their own, or they might bring another alien into the room with the first. In either case, the aliens (or aliens) will stand quite close to the characters, "sharing" the sound generator to create an eerie harmony with the sounds of the others. This is the language used by these aliens 300,000 years ago, when the Ancients still roamed this part of the galaxy.

What is more, these aliens know the full capabilities of the "sound" generators, and their psionic skills and training have made them proficient. For these are not simple sound generators, but full three-dimensional (holographic) projectors, able to produce (or reproduce) any desired sight and sound.

The other artifacts, the personal pocket universe controllers, can also be used efficiently by the aliens. They can move smallish objects over short distances (even from one room to another) with them, but will not try to move large objects or living beings. (They have no interest in moving large objects, and they know that moving living beings without proper preparation can be fatal.) The characters may suspect (for this is true) that the aliens can use the controllers to look psionically into other rooms.

Can the humans really communicate with these aliens? This is somewhat questionable. If the aliens (which are mute, by the way) are brought together with a sound generator, they will eagerly make use of it to communicate with their own language, and they will seemingly respond in a small way with sounds that the humans make, but the humans will never develop the ability to project images, nor will they immediately have any luck in establishing genuine two-way communication with the aliens.

So how long does this nugget last? As long as you want it to last. The characters can try several things here. One is to computer-analyze the language that the aliens are using, which is like nothing any of them have ever heard before. Initial studies will be fruitless, other than to indicate that the language is probably artificial, invented for a specific purpose rather than naturally developing among a sentient species over time.

Another thing the humans can do is study the images (occasional) that are projected by the aliens. These show some of the tunnel complexes with various consoles and control panels installed against the walls. There are many of the aliens in the scenes, although in fitting with the fact that they are all clones, all appear identical to the humans. Of rather more interest is the occasional robot that strolls through the scene, its smoothness of motion evidence for its very highly advanced gravitic propulsion system. From these flybys, it is difficult to guess what the function of these robots might have been.

No matter what happens in these interchanges with the aliens, Akidda is a fool if he doesn't try to record everything with his holographic recorder. If he ever gets permission to publish from the Naval authorities, this will certainly be the scoop of the century.

Whether these aliens were in fact the Ancients should be left a question at this point. There is not enough evidence to tell either way.

14. AN UNWELCOME VISITATION

Aybee fights off Zhodani in his sleep

Location is back on the surface of Pixie

Scene: Individual quarters have been provided for the use of the characters while on Pixie. During the night (after a hard day in the "mines"), the characters hear the sounds of a struggle from Aybee's room.

Action: If the player handling Aybee is a good role-player and doesn't embarrass easily, this scene can be a great deal of fun. Pass him an index card with what he needs to

know, or clue him in earlier so he's ready for this nugget. The stress of the day's activities has built up in him, and he is having nothing more glorious than an old-fashioned nightmare. Still, a good role-player can be particularly detailed in his depiction of what the other characters can hear. Shouts of "Get back, don't come any closer" and so on are all appropriate here.

Naturally, Aybee's door is locked, and he's not likely to get up during his nightmare to open it, so the other characters will have to break down the door to find out the truth of the matter. Depending on your own sense of orneriness, you could impose any amount of delay here — perhaps the door is particularly sturdy, or maybe you could encourage the characters to have some kind of "weapon" at hand first — all the while Aybee's player is raising a ruckus.

15. MORE SECRETS IN THE TUNNELS OF THE ANCIENTS
The PCs find the wrong place at the wrong time
Location is in the underground Ancient site on Pixie

Scene: While exploring the tunnels again (perhaps in the company of some aliens), the characters find a small stack of shipping crates, carefully sealed and marked for delivery at Forboldn, a world rimward several jumps away.

Action: Well, of course the characters are going to rip into the seals, curious as to what is in these crates. What players wouldn't?

The crates are carefully packed with various Ancient artifacts, including some sound generators, some pocket universe controllers, and various samples of metal from the tunnel complex. These crates shouldn't be here, and certainly not addressed to some stranger several worlds away.

The characters should have a little time to stew over this development, but they needn't worry much because the solution to this mystery soon arrives on the scene: Commodore Beganaadi and a henchman, armed with laser rifles.

Here commences the classic scene which occurs in every mystery story, where the villain explains his nefarious doings to the good guys while holding them at gunpoint. The commodore in this assignment at Pixie realized that he had the opportunity for a truly wonderful retirement fund. By embezzling artifacts, he can sell them at another world to smugglers willing to pay an exorbitant price. The only difficulty in his plan was how to explain the sudden disappearance of the artifacts. Fortunately for the commodore, this difficulty has been surmounted by the presence and investigations of the characters.

The arrival insystem of the Vargr was a chance coincidence, but it helped to fuel fears of possible Zhodani activity nearby. After that, it was a simple matter for the commodore to plant a "Zhodani" bomb, made up from a souvenir he acquired in action earlier during the Fifth Frontier War. The discovery of that bomb by the characters clinched the fact of Zhodani presence at the Pixie system, so the disappearance of the artifacts — and the destruction of the site and the Naval base — will have a very simple official explanation, especially since there will be no real evidence left. In conclusion, the commodore apologizes to the characters that his plans necessitate their deaths.

16. CAN AYBEE SAVE THE DAY?
Aybee's circuits finally flip out
Location is in the underground Ancient site on Pixie

Scene: *See the action paragraph for details.*

Action: For the full enjoyment of this scene, you will need to prearrange a little bit of it with Aybee's player. As mentioned in the sidebar, Aybee has been having lapses of memory, none of which has so far been dangerous. Now that changes. What Aybee believes, under the stress of this situation, is that his laser welder is still installed in his right arm, and that Dr. Krenstein has given him the password that allows Aybee to use his weapon against another person.

If the other players do not know what is going on, then Aybee's player can have the most fun here. He is likely to advance menacingly upon the commodore, brandishing his arm and saying that there is no way he can get away with it. The commodore and his henchman, of course, will have no clue as to what is going on, particularly if the other characters are shouting, trying to get Aybee to calm down.

Let this "confrontation" go on as long as is enjoyable, and then let loose: the commodore (as befits his villainous nature) brings his laser to bear on Aybee and fires off a shot, hitting Aybee square in the chest.

Under any normal circumstances such a shot, although damaging, would not be too serious against the robot. In this case, however, Aybee's synaptic processing overreacts and shuts Aybee's systems down. He collapses in a heap on the floor, even though the damage to his systems is minor.

The characters are herded down the tunnel to a storage room (temporarily installed there by the Navy investigators) and locked in. (The characters will have to drag Aybee, of course, but that's OK — it is much easier to engage in hard physical labor when a person is in the sights of a laser weapon.)

17. THE LAST LEG OF THE TRIP
The PCs escape and save Pixie
Location is in the underground Ancient site on Pixie

Scene: It takes a while for your eyes to get used to the dim illumination in the store room. Boxes of various sizes are stacked against the wall, while Aybee is still slumped in a corner. It may be some time before you are rescued. Besides, there's something the commodore said in the tunnel that still nags at the back of your mind...

Action: What the commodore said, of course, was that the disappearance of the artifacts would not be noticed once the planet of Pixie was *destroyed.* It should not take the characters long to find that one of the boxes contains a powerful bomb, set with a time delay fuse of several hours duration. Someone with training in demolition could probably disarm the bomb in time, given the right tools. Unfortunately, there does not seem to be that person or those tools locked up here in the store room.

As for the contents of the other boxes, there is a variety of miscellaneous supplies that could be useful to an expedition such as this one. The characters can find holocrystals for recordings (these are all blank), some sealed snack rations, a power pack for a portable densitometer, and other such useless items. But wedged between two of the crates — evidently missed by the commodore's gang — is an Ancient sound generator. Finding this should involve some effort on the part of the characters: don't just tell them it is there, as it is a key to their eventual escape.

In the meanwhile, the characters can more closely examine their situation. The bomb appears to be booby trapped; the characters should be strongly discouraged from tampering with it. If they do, roll the dice behind your screen, look extremely upset for a second, then breathe a sigh of relief and say, "No, it's not disarmed, but you thought for a second there that you were going to blow yourself up." If they insist on trying a second time, go ahead and blow them up. (Some people never learn.)

Aybee, of course, is unconscious, but his damage is minor and Dr. Krenstein should be able to revive him without much difficulty. Make up a task roll for this, but be generous for the lack of proper tools. In any case, once Aybee is conscious, he is very weak. (He needs to be conscious, or his player sits out the rest of the adventure; he needs to be weak, or with his robotic strength he would just break down the door.)

Meanwhile, guessing from the size of the bomb here and the unknown nature of the Ancient power plant buried in the core of the planet, it is entirely possible that an explosion would generate a chain reaction that could destroy the whole world, and perhaps the orbital base besides.

How, then, can the characters escape and stop the commodore from getting away with these priceless artifacts? The solution is to use the Ancient sound generator found in the store room. Let the players have free rein with their creativity in this, as there are several possible solutions.

One way out is to use the sound generator to make a very loud noise, one likely to attract attention from others. This could work, but it is not without its dangers: if the noise is too overwhelming, the characters could be stunned, as in Nugget 8 above. If the sound made is too soft, no one will hear it, and besides, who knows how long it could be before someone strolls by this area? If it takes too long, the bomb could go off.

Another solution might be to generate some kind of destructive sound waves that could break down the door. The difficulty here would be that the characters, not having been psionically trained (other that their brief experience on Terra), might not be able to effectively create such a sound. Another problem could be that such a sound, if not carefully aimed, could instead destroy something else, like one of the boxes — even one containing the bomb. These objections aren't meant to make the task of your players impossible, by the way — if your players think of this, let them try, but keep the suspense up by letting a few things go wrong before they succeed.

In fact, the overriding concern with this nugget should be creativity: anything clever will work to free the characters.

What they do next is up to you, in accordance with the players' temperaments. If they like gunplay, then they should have to go after the commodore and his gang (beef their side up so the fight is interesting, of course) after being armed with weapons of their own. If they enjoy starship chases and combats, let the commodore have gotten away — almost — and the characters can chase after him and shoot him out of the sky. (Be careful not to destroy those artifacts, though — let your players worry about this whenever the characters get a lucky shot.) For an even larger confrontation, let the Navy be suspicious of the characters' motives, and the entire base could be put on alert to stop the characters from hurting the "innocent" commodore. Finally, if your group is more cerebral in their playing style, just let them radio up to the orbital base, and have the MPs stop the commodore in time.

For even more adventure, though, you could use any of these scenarios, but let the commodore get clean away at the last minute. The party could then decide to chase after him, jumping to another system in hopes of finding him there. If you want to go for this fuller scenario, you might have the commodore drop hints as to his destination when he reveals his plans to the characters down in the tunnels.

18. TYING UP LOOSE ENDS
Finishing the five-year campaign
Location is on the world Pixie

Scene: *Varies, depending on the conclusion of the previous nugget.*

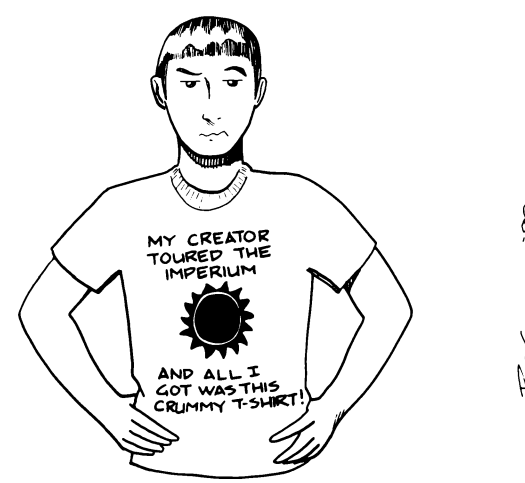
Action: The characters may want to conduct more investigations on Pixie. If so — and if you're interested in inventing some more details — they could do this. The aliens, though, will all die within a matter of days no matter what anyone does. They were genetically designed and raised for a much more rarefied environment, and not enough is known about their biology to keep them alive. If the characters want details here, there are plenty to choose from: no food (what do these aliens eat, anyway?), massive infection (from these "dirty" humans), or whatever.

Once the characters are finished at Pixie, they can travel on to their homes at Rhylanor, Mora, and Deneb. All four should have enough memories of this long journey to last a lifetime — not that this is likely to stop anyone from travelling on once it's in the blood.

All four characters were knighted in the course of their journey. They travelled to the homeworlds of three of the major races, and discovered at one of these that a "major" race didn't necessarily deserve this status. The group stopped cold a number of threats to the stability of the Imperium, from racist terrorists, psionic spymasters, and alien manipulators. They visited Terra, the original homeworld of all human life, and along the way made lots of new friends.

Dr. Krenstein was able to get out of his laboratory and confront life in all its variety head on. Dur managed on this journey to escape the boredom of a desk job with the Scouts. Akidda fulfilled his responsibilities of his Touring Award by sending in another scoop every quarter. And Aybee, once just a machine — although a very advanced machine — achieved the breakthrough experiences that led him to true sentience.

All in all, quite a trip. Is everyone packed and ready for the next one? •



UPON COMPLETION OF THEIR GRAND TOUR, DR. KRENSTEIN BOUGHT AYBEE SOME NEW CLOTHES...

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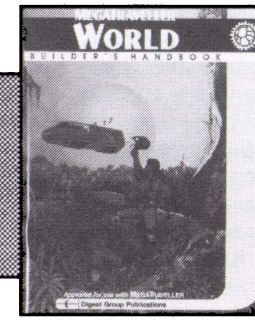

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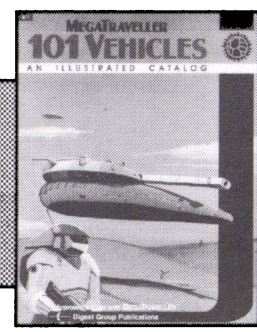

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The Pirates of Tetrini

MEGATRAVELLER ADVENTURE
—by Greg Videll

This adventure takes place in Zarushagar sector and involves the player characters (PCs) in a mission to investigate a likely pirate base.

For the PCs, Oasis and Wolf subsectors (Zarushagar K and L) represent home. It is a relatively prosperous and stable place — as much as possible given the current conflict. The problems facing the region are mainly external, from sources such as Dulinor and the Solomani. Recently, however, these worlds have been facing a rapidly increasing local threat from pirates.

The starting date for this adventure is 121-1120, in the Cossor/Wolf system (Zarushagar 2424).

SUMMARY OF NUGGETS

The following summarizes what each nugget covers.

1. Escort: This nugget sets up the adventure for the PCs. They are volunteers, pressed into reserve fleet duty to help escort a convoy of merchant ships.

2. A Fight to the Death: The group's worst fear materializes: pirates attack. The PCs must fight with the pirates and do their best to save as many merchant vessels as possible.

3. Aftermath: This nugget deals with the harrowing results of the pirate attack.

4. Assignment: *Space Jigar* (key): The PCs are given an opportunity to personally "go after" these pirates as a special recon mission. This nugget details the mission the characters are to undertake.

5. Departure: This nugget covers any preparations the PCs may desire to make for their mission.

6. In Transit: This nugget presents possible events and encounters while the characters are on their way to Tetrini/Wolf.

7. Breakout (key): Once the group arrives in the Tetrini system, this nugget describes the challenges facing the PCs.

8. Touchdown (key): This nugget puts the characters on the planet and deals with the beginning of the mission.

9. Reconnaissance (key): Once the PCs decide to check out the pirate base located outside of Port Griffen, this nugget covers the action.

10. Call to Action (key): A shocking discovery leads to an a difficult decision for the PCs.

11. Escape: The PCs must return to their ship in the midst of the winter storm while being pursued by pirates.

12. Run to Jump Point: The PCs fight with a pirate ship while trying desperately to get to jump point.

13. Going Home: This nugget concludes the adventure.

SETUP

The section below describes the initial situation to the players.

"You have been crewing a Type T patrol ship for the Duchy of Oasis Reserve Forces now for several months. Merchant convoy duty is not exactly the most interesting of assignments, but recently things have become more lively with the local pirates on the prowl. The increasing pirate activity has begun to choke offworld trade in the region, and the Duchy is pressing all available forces into service, in hopes of improving the situation. Your current mission is to escort a convoy of eight merchant ships to Cossor, a world on the spinward edge of the Duchy. You have just arrived in the Cossor system and are currently travelling toward Cossor's starport, Lingsten."

After presenting this information to the players, proceed to nugget 1.

1. ESCORT

The PCs continue to escort the merchant convoy to a world
Location is Cossor/Wolf (Zarushagar 2424)

Scene: The bridge of the *Zeshliama* is quiet as the you concentrate on your assigned tasks. Text and graphics hover over your control panels, changing as you request alternative readouts or views. You look out the viewport to starboard and see the bright white speck of the *Margin of Profit* maintaining its formation at the edge of visual range. Its subdued running lights are tiny flashing sparks against the black of space.

Action: The PC's type T patrol cruiser, the *Zeshliama,* is named after a hero of Darmine myth. Its Craft Profile is listed in the *Imperial Encyclopedia.* Use this nugget to introduce the PCs to the situation and their ship. Presenting the action in this nugget should not pose any great difficulty.

The characters should be assigned to crew positions based on skills held and player preference. If there aren't enough characters to fill all 8 positions, the referee should use NPCs to round out the crew.

The Reserve Forces (or ResFor, for short), of which the PCs are a part, are composed of loaned ground and naval units contributed by the Duchy's member worlds, as well as a number of experienced volunteers. These forces augment the Duchy's army and navy. The characters are assumed to be volunteers and not members of any world's forces. ResFor pays twice the normal crew salaries plus combat bonuses in order to attract qualified volunteers.

2. A FIGHT TO THE DEATH
PCs get involved in a battle with pirates
Location is Cossor/Wolf (Zarushagar 2424)

Scene: Your ship's sensor panel suddenly screams at you with a red flashing "bogie" coming out of no where, and incoming laser fire barely misses you as the stars abruptly swirl and hop out your viewport. Thank the asteroids for your automatic evasive maneuver software!

Action: Run this battle using the starship combat rules in the *Referee's Manual.*

The pirates, part of the *Silver Blade* band, have managed to sneak one of their Fat Trader merchant "Q" ships into the PC's convoy. The pirate's other ship approached using EM masking, dropped their mask at extreme range, and opened fire on the PC's patrol cruiser. The idea is to lure the patrol cruiser away from the merchant group. Once the patrol cruiser is sufficiently far enough away from the merchant group, the clandestine pirate "Q" ship will open fire on one of the other unarmed merchants in the convoy.

The other merchants are all unarmed (except the pirate's "Q" ship, of course), and the merchant convoy's only escort is the PC's armed patrol cruiser (remember what we said about the Duchy's forces being short handed). If the PCs start to gain the upper hand with the corsair, the vessel will break off and jump, preferring to minimize their losses. The "Q" ship will break off and jump soon thereafter, but will remain as long as reasonably possible, in an attempt to board and loot the merchant vessel they disable.

Impose a totally destroyed result if the PCs succeed in severely damaging the corsair, so as to prevent any pirates being taken prisoner. The players should not learn too much this soon.

After the battle, the particular merchant that was attacked by the "Q" ship will not respond to hails over the radio and its transponder is off the air. An active sensor scan is required to locate the ship.

To locate the damaged merchant:
Routine, Sensor Ops, Edu, 2 min
Referee: This task must be successfully rolled three times in order to triangulate the ship's position.

To plot and fly an intercept course:
Routine, Pilot, Navigation, 3 min

At the completion of this nugget, nugget 3 covers what the group finds when they approach the damaged merchant.

3. AFTERMATH
PCs investigate the damage merchant
Location is Cossor/Wolf (Zarushagar 2424)

Scene: What's left of the merchant vessel is slowly tumbling through space, surrounded by a small cloud of debris. Its hull has been breached in numerous places and the port side cargo door is missing. No lights are visible. There's still no response over the radio.

Action: The vessel is a total write-off, good for little other than salvage. When the group investigates the hulk, they will find that all six crewmembers have been killed. It will be apparent from the position of the bodies that the captain intended to surrender the cargo in exchange for the lives of the crew, and that they were killed anyway.

Let the PCs know that a definite human cost was paid in the attack. Use this event to give the PCs a personal motivation for the rest of the adventure.

4. ASSIGNMENT: *SPACE JIGAR*
The PCs are offered a recon mission to a possible pirate base
Location is Cossor/Wolf (Zarushagar 2424)

Scene: The morning after the attack on the convoy, you receive a call to report to the Reserve Forces Office at Cossor Navy Base. This strikes you as odd since you have already participated in a formal debriefing yesterday after the *Zesh* made port.

After passing numerous security checkpoints, you are escorted to a conference room. Present is Lt. Commander Ibn Saud, a dark-complected man. With him is a young woman wearing the uniform of an Independent Navy commander. The room is dominated by the conference table and the chairs flanking it. Overlooking all is a portrait of Duchess Victoria, leader of the Duchy. Once you are seated and the Independent Navy commander begins.

Action: The meeting is opened by Cmdr. Bennington, who is in her late thirties and a former Imperial Navy officer. Her position is that of liaison between the Navy and the ResFor. Bennington commends the characters for their attempt to save the convoy and asks if they'd like another shot at the pirates.

Military Intelligence has gathered enough evidence that they now believe the *Silver Blade* band of pirates to be operating out of Tetrini/Wolf (1823 Zarushagar). If true, this would be the first pirate base the Duchy has managed to specifically locate since the recent sharp rise in piracy.

Lt. Cmdr. Ibn Saud takes over at this point. Ibn Saud is in his early fifties with a dark, weathered complexion. The characters know him to be a dedicated professional with a ready wit when the situation allows. He explains that he's recommended the group for a recon mission to Tetrini. The Navy can't spare a ship for the mission at the moment leaving ResFor as the only other asset to draw on. Ibn Saud realizes that this falls outside the group's normal duties, but because of their experience and proximity, he considers them the best qualified for the job. The mission is strictly voluntary. (If anyone asks, pay for the mission is twice ResFor's normal salary plus an unspecified bonus).

Bennington tells the group that their objective is to go to Tetrini and make a covert reconnaisance of the *Silver Blade* pirate base. How many pirates are there at this base? How are they armed? What kind of armor do they have? Do they have any stockpiled weapons?

Since the characters are not commandos, Bennington emphasizes that this is to be a simple advance recon mission. At no time is the group to alert the pirates that they have been found by the Duchy. In order to minimize the likelihood that the pirates will suspect the Duchy, the group's patrol cruiser is being repainted with the symbol of the famous *Space Jigar* pirate band (a jigar is a fierce triphibian native to Provalan). The *Space Jigar* group also operates in this region. If the PCs are discovered, they must do everything in their power to convince the Tetrini pirates that they themselves are fellow pirates.

Based on what the PCs discover, the Navy will decide what kind of strike force to assemble in order to eliminate the base.

5. DEPARTURE
The PCs prepare for their recon mission as "pirates"
Location is Lingsten starport, Cossor/Wolf (Zarushagar 2424)

Scene: The Marine sentry snaps to attention as you enter the hangar bay. Bright light from the overhead floodlights reflects off the black rock walls and your patrol cruiser. Navy techs are busy performing maintenance checks and repainting the hull of the *Zesh.* The Duchy insignia has been removed from both tails and the black and red *Space Jigar* insignia has been put in its place. You step aside as a string

of grav floaters bearing equipment to be stowed hums by. Judging by the amount of gear, it looks like you're prepared for anything.

Action: The Navy will supply whatever the characters request, within reason, for the mission. This includes weapons appropriate for the skills held by the crew. Keep in mind that this is a recon mission, however. Battle dress, fusion rifles and tactical missiles will not be available.

All equipment, clothing, weapons, and even the *Zeshliama* itself will be "sanitized" — any clues which could connect the mission to the Duchy will be erased. The Navy doesn't want to spook the pirates into pulling up stakes and leaving. They feel this can best be accomplished if the pirates are unaware that the Duchy is looking for them.

Battle damage done to the *Zesh* in its fight with the pirate ship will also be repaired, although the hull scars will be left, to further give the impression that the PCs are part of a pirate band trying hard to make ends meet.

6. IN TRANSIT

Referee notes on the trip to Tetrini

This part of the adventure can be as long or as short as the referee desires, based on the player's interests. Show the players the starmap and let them choose the route they prefer for travelling to Tetrini. Various events are presented below. Other ideas for encounters or events can be drawn from the ship encounter charts in the *Imperial Encyclopedia* or the *Referee's Screen*.

Wilderness Refueling: Gas giant refueling should be conducted at each intermediate stop.

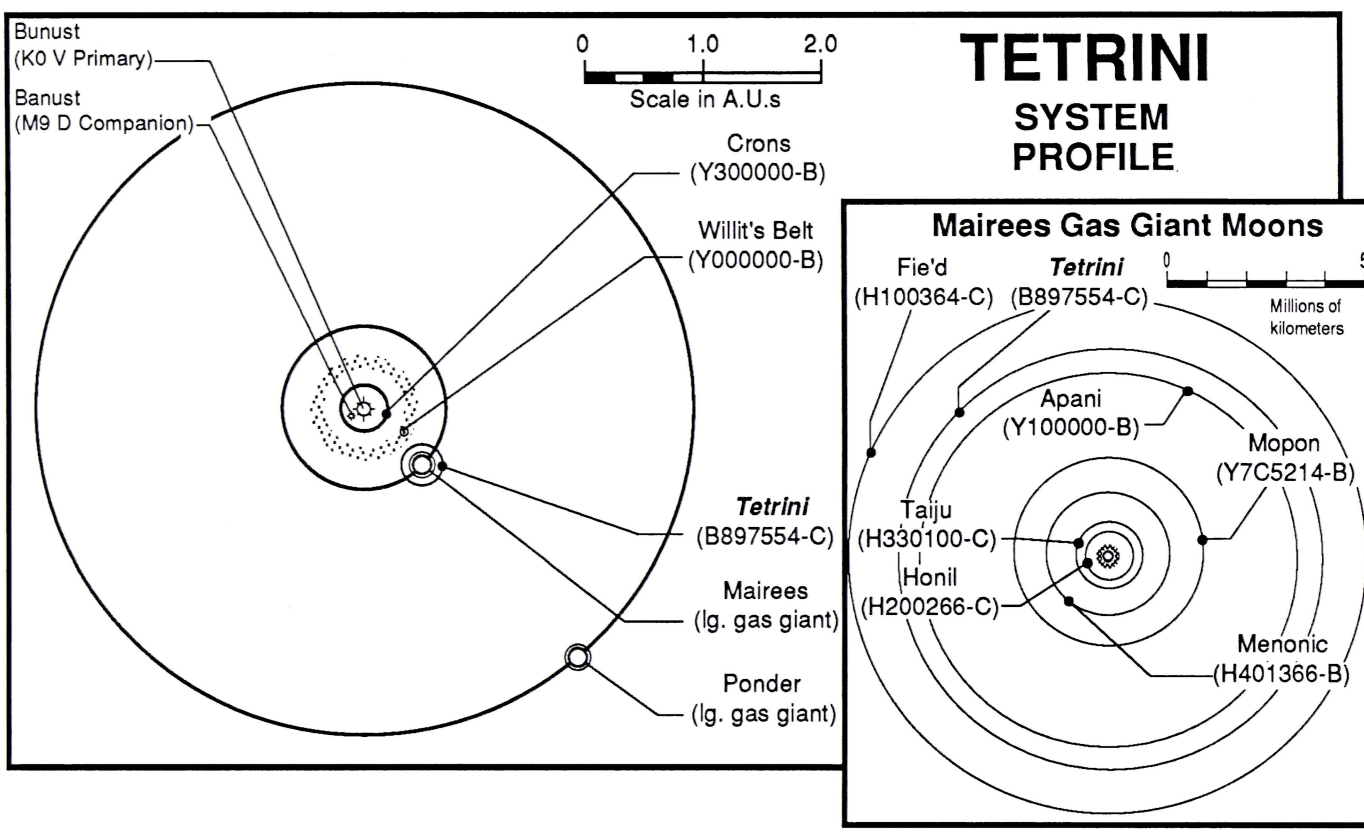
To skim a gas giant for fuel:
Routine, Pilot, Navigation, 1 hr. (hazardous)
Referee: Mishaps can include simple turbulence, excessive radiation exposure, collision with debris or heat damage to the hull.

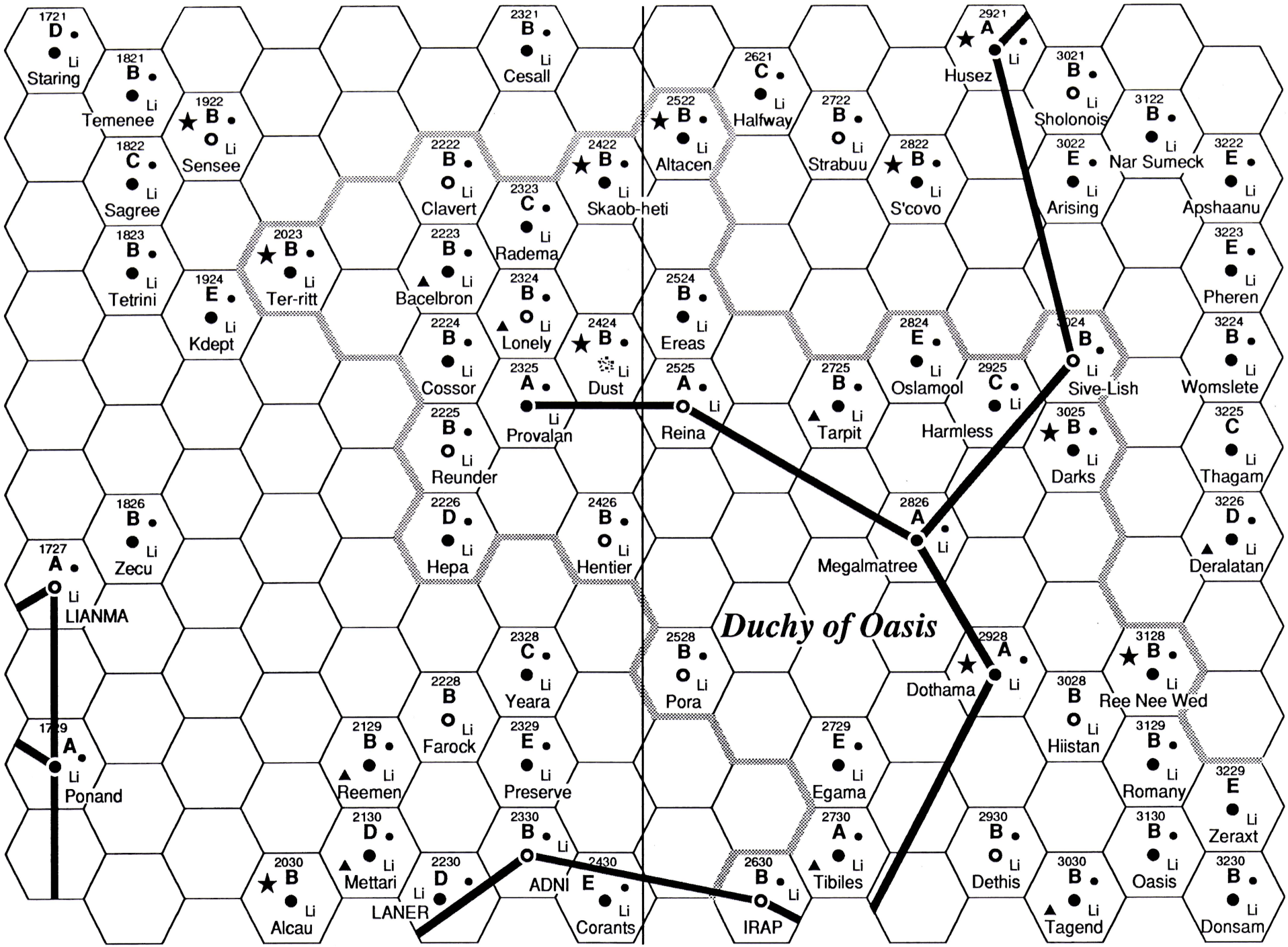
Bacelbron: This system was the location of the sector's IISS Contact and Liaison School before the Rebellion. It has since become a haven for Scouts wishing to "retire" form Lucan's service. The Scouts maintain friendly relations with the Duchy although they wish to remain aloof to it. The Scouts prefer not to choose sides, and they will do little to inhibit or assist the group as a pirate vessel.

A port call during refueling at the Scout base near the gas giant Benin could be made in order to trade information or intelligence. The Scouts are unaware of any possible *Silver Blade* pirate ships that may have passed through the system.

Kdept: In mid-1119, ships of the Vengeance Fleet sowed interdiction satellites, or *insats,* in the upper atmosphere of the gas giant the characters refuel at. This was done to blunt the advances of Dulinor's commerce raiders.

While most of the insats are no longer functioning (because of lack of fuel, radiation exposure and so on), one does happen to remain operational. It is in a dormant state waiting to be activated by a ship failing to transmit the proper signal.





Wolf (subsector K of Zarushagar) **Oasis (subsector L of Zarushagar)**

Wolf Subsector

Wolf subsector (subsector K of Zarushagar) has a rich history dating back to First Imperium times. In modern times under the shattered Imperium, many worlds of this subsector belong to the Duchy of Oasis, a local organization of worlds headquartered in Oasis subsector.

Provalan is the homeworld of the Dishaan, the famous aggressive minor race mentioned so many times in Vilani recordings of over six thousand years ago. Lianma is the site of the notable *Battle of the Dwarf Sun*, fought in -4210 during the Vilani Consolidation wars.

Name	*Location*	*UPP*	*Bases*	*Remarks*	*Zn*	*Data*	*Align*	*Stellar*
Staring	1721	D527587-7		Ni		514	Li	M3 V K3 D
Lianma	1727	A1009A7-F		Hi In Va Na Xb		204	Li	F0 D
Ponand	1729	A636321-F		Ni Xb		614	Li	M3 V
Temenee	1821	B465220-D		Ni		804	Li	G2 V
Sagree	1822	C756440-A		Ni		605	Li	F3 V M4 D
Tetrini	1823	B897554-C		Ni Ag		812	Li	K0 V M9 D
Zecu	1826	B667253-D		Ni		603	Li	K0 V M8 D
Sensee	1922	B310010-A	N	Ni		715	Li	G4 VI M0 D M2 D
Kdept	1924	E625785-9				623	Li	F4 V M2 D
Ter-ritt	2023	B756440-A	N	Ni Dc		603	Li	F2 D M8 D
Alcau	2030	B897554-C	N	Ni Ag		100	Li	G2 V
Reemen	2129	B77A405-A	S	Ni Wa		703	Li	F2 V
Mettari	2130	D654002-9	S	Ni		204	Li	F1 VI M4 D M0 D
Clavert	2222	B100433-B		Ni Va Dc		914	Li	M6 IV
Bacelbron	2223	B525677-C	S	Ni Dc		614	Li	M3 V M5 D
Cossor	2224	B331721-B		Po Na Dc		724	Li	M0 V
Reunder	2225	B100434-A		Ni Va Dc		803	Li	M0 V M5 D
Hepa	2226	D465220-6		Ni Dc		701	Li	G4 V M1 D
Farock	2228	B100434-D		Ni Va		820	Li	A3 V
Laner	2230	D465984-9		Hi		404	Li	G2 V
Cesall	2321	B434656-D		Ni		322	Li	K2 V
Radema	2323	C444420-C		Ni Dc		214	Li	G2 VI
Lonely	2324	B200667-A	S	Ni Va Na Dc O:2325		402	Li	M0 V
Provalan	2325	A6888CF-F		Cp Xb Dc		604	Li	F0 D M3 D
Yeara	2328	C64448B-B		Ni		504	Li	M1 D M2 D
Preserve	2329	E449895-A				913	Li	K4 V
Adni	2330	B300A98-E		Hi In Va Na Xb		122	Li	F3 D
Skaob-heti	2422	B5A4622-D	N	Ni Dc		903	Li	M2 V M2 D
Dust	2424	B0006AC-D	N	Ni As Na Dc		604	Li	M1 V M7 D
Hentier	2426	B100433-B		Ni Va Dc		412	Li	M0 V
Corants	2430	E756440-9		Ni		901	Li	G0 V

The Wolf subsector contains 31 worlds with a total population of 23.773 billion. The highest tech level is F at Lianma, Ponand, and Provalan. All worlds worlds claim allegiance to Lucan's Imperium. The data column lists the population multiple, number of planetoid belts, and number of gas giants. Key: Cp=Subsector capital. Xb=Xboat station. Dc=Duchy of Oasis world. O:=Owner.

Oasis Subsector

Oasis subsector (subsector L of Zarushagar) was first settled during the First Imperium. As the Long Night spread across the region, the worlds of this subsector managed to survive fairly well by banding together in a pocket empire known as the Duchy of Oasis. When the Third Imperium came upon the scene, many worlds of the Duchy were reluctant to join the new order.

The Duchy worlds eventually did join the Third Imperium. But with the shattering of the Imperium, many worlds in this subsector have banded together to form the Duchy once again. The Duchy, however, claims their ultimate allegiance is to Lucan.

Name	*Location*	*UPP*	*Bases*	*Remarks*	*Zn*	*Data*	*Align*	*Stellar*
Altacen	2522	B756440-C	N	Ni Dc		303	Li	F2 D
Ereas	2524	B897554-A		Ni Ag Dc		113	Li	G5 D
Reina	2525	A200667-F		Ni Va Na Xb Dc O:2826		303	Li	M4 V
Pora	2528	B100433-B		Ni Va Dc		524	Li	M0 V
Halfway	2621	C322311-B		Ni Po		402	Li	M9 V
Irap	2630	B100A99-C		Hi In Va Na Xb		702	Li	K0 D
Strabuu	2722	B100434-B		Ni Va		201	Li	M3 V
Tarpit	2725	B465220-C	S	Ni Dc		704	Li	G2 V M0 D
Egama	2729	E756440-9		Ni Dc		602	Li	F1 V M8 D
Tibiles	2730	A897554-C	S	D0 Ni Ag Dc		703	Li	F5 D M8 D
S'covo	2822	B465220-D	N	Ni		824	Li	G3 D
Oslamool	2824	E756440-9		Ni Dc		603	Li	F1 D
Megalmatree	2826	A897554-F		Ni Ag Xb Dc		614	Li	F0 D M4 D M6 D
Husez	2921	A541530-D	N	Ni Po Xb		401	Li	F1 V
Harmless	2925	C726510-A		Ni Dc		714	Li	G4 V
Dothama	2928	A584161-F	N	Ni Xb Dc O:2826		402	Li	K4 D
Dethis	2930	B110867-C		Na Dc O:3030		202	Li	M4 VI
Sholonois	3021	B100433-B		Ni Va		114	Li	M8 VI M3 D
Arising	3022	E525677-7		Ni		305	Li	K7 II
Sive-Lish	3024	B100433-C		C0 Ni Va Xb Dc		223	Li	G0 IV
Darks	3025	B525677-C	N	Ni Dc		103	Li	M2 V M2 D
Hiistan	3028	B100433-B		Ni Va Dc		700	Li	M4 V
Tagend	3030	B525677-D	S	Ni Dc		505	Li	M3 V
Nar Sumeck	3122	B756440-E		Ni		822	Li	F0 D M7 D
Ree Nee Wed	3128	B897554-D	N	Ni Ag Dc		913	Li	G4 V M1 D
Romany	3129	B667253-C		Ni Dc		904	Li	F2 V
Oasis	3130	B6888CF-C		Cp Dc		804	Li	F2 V M0 D
Apshaanu	3222	E897554-8		Ni Ag		703	Li	F7 D M9 D
Pheren	3223	E667253-8		Ni		404	Li	F3 V M0 D
Womslete	3224	B6878BF-A				302	Li	F2 V M4 D
Thagam	3225	C64448B-A		Ni		200	Li	F4 V
Deralatan	3226	D449895-6	S			405	Li	K1 V
Zeraxt	3229	E446459-9		Ni Dc		800	Li	G0 D
Donsam	3230	B766502-A		Ni Ag Dc		303	Li	K4 V

The Oasis subsector contains 34 worlds with a total population of 76.919 billion. The highest tech level is F at Reina, Megalmatree, and Dothama. All worlds worlds claim allegiance to Lucan's Imperium. The data column lists the population multiple, number of planetoid belts, and number of gas giants. Key: Cp=Subsector capital. Xb=Xboat station. Dc=Duchy of Oasis world. O:=Owner.

While the characters are in the process of skimming the gas giant, the insat will go active and attack the *Zeshliama.* The insat is a 100 ton automated satellite armed with one fifty ton, Factor 9, tech 15 missile bay and a factor 1 computer. It can only attempt an attack on a roll of 8+, otherwise it must wait for the next combat round to fire. (Faulty software is to blame, fortunately).

7. BREAKOUT
The PCs arrive in the Tetrini system
Location is Tetrini (Zarushagar 1823)

Scene: You feel the last of the vibrations subside as the *Zeshliama* transitions from jump into the Tetrini system. A quick scan of the controls indicates the EM Masking system is up and running.

Action: The characters should maintain as low a profile as possible once they enter they system. The PCs should study the system diagram of Tetrini to determine the best strategy for getting into and out of the system.

Once the group is in the system, they need to consider what they are going to do about refueling. As the diagram shows, Tetrini itself is a gas giant moon-planet, which means most vessels going into and out of this system typically refuel at Tetrini's central gas giant. Also note, however, that the Tetrini system includes a gas giant that orbits at the distant edge of the system. This gas giant is a much more likely location for the PCs to plot as the entry point for their ship.

Anything which could give away their presence should be avoided. This includes active EMS scans, radio transmissions, or running the power plant more than necessary because of the neutrinos given off in the fusion process.

Once the group is in-system, they'll want to look around and get a feel for what's going on. The following task should be rolled several times, steadily building up a "traffic picture" of the Tetrini system and any difficulties that must be overcome.

To conduct a passive EMS or neutrino detection scan:
Routine, Sensor Ops, Edu, 30 min (uncertain)
Referee: This is the standard task for a passive scan in this adventure.

The group will quickly learn that this new pirate band is a big traffic element of this otherwise quiet, lightly populated system. While this system has a nice quality class B starport, the relatively light population of the system means that ship traffic is sparse at best. Locating the pirate's base should be easy, since it is probably not too far from the starport, given the way things look in the system.

There are two obstacles barring the way to the planet. The first is a pirate corsair in close orbit around the world. It conducts random patrols several times a day and operates out of the orbital port. The second comes from the orbital starport itself. The port's active traffic control sensors run continuously and can detect any ship within line of sight out to 20 diameters.

This nugget is intended to give the players some tense moments, but they should ultimately succeed at getting past these hindrances.

To evade the pirate ship:
Routine, Pilot, Navigation, 10 min (uncertain)
Referee: Failure at this task increases the difficulty by one level. The task is then rerolled and any subsequent failures are ignored (but tell the PCs they had a close call).

Avoiding the ground based sensors is actually easy, as long as the *Zesh* keeps out of the port's line of sight (that is, they approach from the backside of the planet from the port). If they do stray into the sensor's sights, the corsair will be alerted and will investigate (roll the evasion task above).

Finally, the group needs to find a place to land.

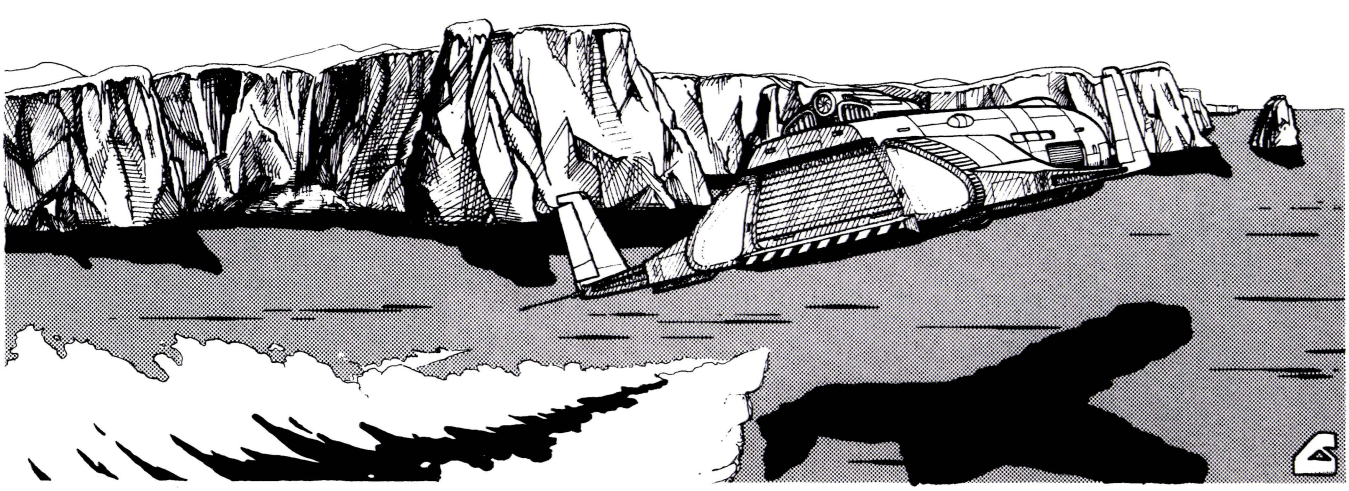
To locate a secret landing site:
Routine, Sensor Ops, Recon, 20 min
Referee: If the PCs decide to use nap-of-earth tactics on their approach, make this task difficult and hazardous, and use Pilot skill in place of Recon.

One interesting possibility is for the PCs to land their ship off the shore in the ocean (not far from the starport), and use a sealed air/raft as transport from there.

An even more interesting possibility is for the group to not sneak into the system at all, but to come in presenting themselves as a unit of the *Space Jigar* pirate band.

8. TOUCHDOWN
The PCs land on Tetrini during winter weather
Location is near starport Griffen on Tetrini (Zarushagar 1823)

Scene: The chill wind seeps through your cold weather gear and around your compressor mask. A light snow is falling, adding to the half meter already on the ground. You can hear the whine of the GCarrier's power plant coming online.



Snowflakes fall around you as you make your way to GCarrier and away from your ship's hideaway.

Action: It is winter in the starport's hemisphere. Temperatures range from a high of -6 degrees C (22 degrees F) to -32 degrees C (-26 degrees F) at night. Snow is not uncommon at this time of year and a quarter of a meter has already fallen. Winds of between 10 to 20 kph are blowing out of the north. The group will have been supplied with the proper cold weather clothing at Cossor.

The landing site will be about 13 km from the starport. The characters have the choice or walking to Port Griffen, difficult and tiring in the snow, or using the *Zesh's* GCarrier to get within a more reasonable walking distance. Since anything larger than the GCarrier will show up on the port sensors, the grav vehicle is the best bet.

Grav vehicles are a common form of transport between the widely separated communities of Tetrini. The PCs may wish to conceal the *Zesh* from any overflights.

To camouflage the ship:
Routine, Recon, End, 18 min (unskilled ok)
Referee: Failure at this task means the *Zeshliama* is discovered while the characters are away. The referee must decide who finds the ship, local inhabitants or the pirates. Locals will either ignore the ship or call the Sheriff in the town of Port Griffen. He will investigate the sighting on his own. Anyone connected with the pirate operation will report the ship to the port security office. A group of eight persons, four port enforcers and four pirates, will attempt to seize the *Zeshliama.* Further events are up to the referee.

Compressor masks must be worn while on planet because of the low oxygen "taint." Strenuous activity without a mask is subject to the following task:

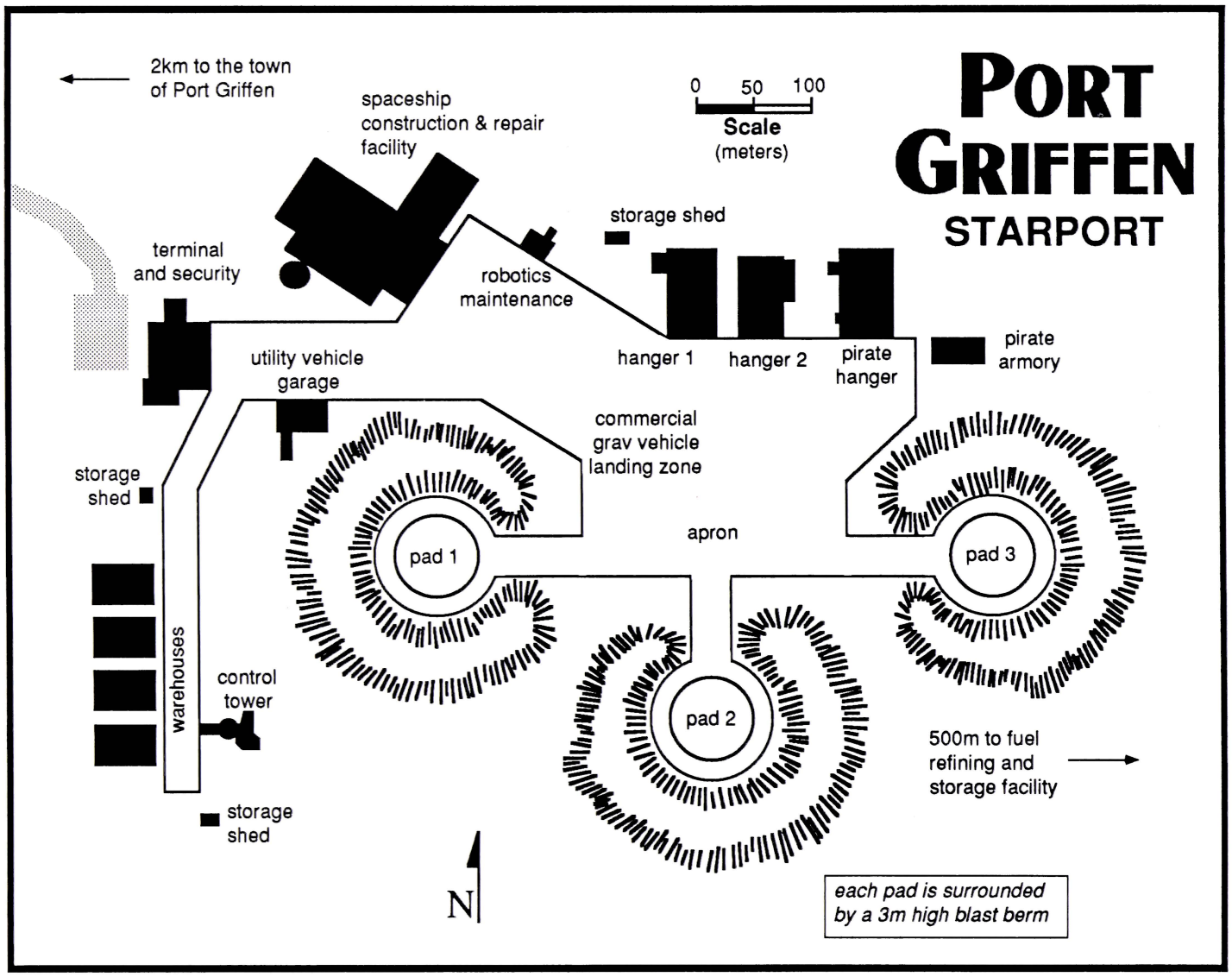
To avoid blacking out:
Difficult, Det, Instant (fateful)
Referee: Failing this task means that the character blacks out for (16-Endurance) minutes. The character regains consciousness 10 minutes later.

About this time the group is ready to proceed, a light snow will begin to fall. It is the first indication of the severe winter storm that is headed for Port Griffen.

9. RECONNAISSANCE
The PCs search for the pirate's base
Location is starport Griffen on Tetrini (Zarushagar 1823)

Scene: Big snowflakes are falling as you survey the port . Most of it is dark and quiet. The only lights on are those in the terminal and from one of the hangars. Every once in a while you catch a glimpse of armed figures among the buildings but you haven't noticed any pattern as of yet.

Action: Observing the starport from a distance will yield the characters little. To learn what they need to know, they'll have to go in and look around. As the group makes its recon, the weather will get progressively worse. Visibility will



drop to no more than a kilometer and the wind will pick up. Show the players the map of the port and let them plan out how they'll do the job.

The following tasks should be rolled as needed.

To pick a building lock:
Difficult, Intrusion or Mech/2, Dex, 30 sec

To disarm an alarm:
Difficult, Intrusion or Elec/2, Dex, 30 sec (fateful)
Referee: Failure sets off a silent alarm at security headquarters in the terminal.

Random guard patrols, some using vehicles from the motor pool, should be encountered along the way. Port Griffen is guarded by a combined force of port enforcers, who answer to Nile Rutherford (see Background Information), and pirate troops. Standard dress for both groups is cloth armored cold weather clothing. The enforcers carry handguns, auto shotguns, or ACRs and they patrol the entire port. Pirate Guards are armed with gauss and laser weapons and tend to stay near Hangar 1. Both groups also carry radios which are monitored by the security office. The number of guards present should be proportional to the size of the character group. Their stats can be generated using the Quick NPC system found in the *Referee's Manual.*

To avoid a guard patrol:
Routine, Stealth, Dex, Instant (fateful)
Referee: Have each player roll this task as necessary. The guards are more concerned with the weather than they are in doing a good job, hence the difficulty level of the task. If the characters have too easy a time of it, though, increase the task difficulty. Guards will challenge the characters first and then radio for help, if necessary.

Finally, tracks left in the snow can be used to follow the characters unless they cover them up. The tracks will remain for half an hour before being masked by falling snow. If the players don't think of this, they will be tracked on a roll of 7+ on 2D.

To conceal their tracks in snow:
Routine, Recon, Int (unskilled ok)
Referee: Failure in this task results in the characters being tracked on a roll of 7+ on 2D. The port will be put on general alert for illegal intruders.

10. CALL TO ACTION

The PCs discover the pirate's big new threat
Location is starport Griffen on Tetrini (Zarushagar 1823)

Scene: You peer around the corner of a building at the hangar. Light spills through open double doors and out on to a ground truck. Several figures are carrying boxes inside. They're carrying cases of the kind used by the military — airtight and heavily constructed with solid latches. One of the figures sets down a case and wipes their hands on their parka. In the dim light you can barely make out what it says on the case. The markings are mostly alphanumeric strings, one series of cases carry the letters "whd-nk".

Action: At some point, the characters should examine Hangar 1. Inside are two corsairs, one of which participated on the raid at Cossor, although the group will be unable to tell this for sure. Both are undergoing maintenance before going out on another raid. Even though the group has found the evidence the Independent Navy needs to authorize a strike, their job is not over.

A pirate first officer is watching a gunner and two technicians attach nuclear warheads to missile boosters. There are two dozen 5 kiloton weapons present, each with its own shielded carrying case. The warheads were recently "acquired" from another pirate band — the *Space Jigars*, in fact — which in turn stole them from a fleet supply depot. The triggers for the weapons are currently in a small warehouse safe, so the characters needn't worry about inadvertently setting off a warhead. The details about the warheads and triggers are presented in the sidebar entitled "The Pirates' Nukes."

While there's no guarantee that the weapons won't be used against the Duchy, encourage the characters to "acquire" the warheads for their "own" pirate band, thus robbing the pirates of the use of these weapons.

Simply destroying or detonating the warheads will betray the PC group for the imposters that they are. If the group slips up by destroying the warheads rather than stealing them for themselves, the pirates will quickly suspect the PCs of being sent by the Duchy authorities to spy on their base.

11. ESCAPE

The PCs return to their ship
Location near the starport Griffen on Tetrini (Zarushagar 1823)

Scene: From somewhere behind you, you can hear the flat crack of gun fire. The rumble of thunder has become increasingly louder as the storm reaches its peak. Visibility is almost nonexistent and the snow has gotten so deep that you almost have to wade through it. Your arms and legs ache from the exaggerated motion needed to plough through the stuff and get back to your GCarrier.

Action: Once the characters have executed their plan, they should be discovered by the pirates (if they haven't yet been already) in order to provide a thrilling climax to the adventure. If the players came up with a well-thought out plan to deal with the warheads, one that leaves little chance of detection, put off any pursuit until they board the GCarrier.

The characters must first find their way back to the GCarrier. This will be difficult because of the storm. Visibility is down to about 25 meters and the wind is gusting up to 32 kph (20 mph).

To avoid becoming lost in the storm:
Difficult, Navigation, Int, Instant (fateful)
Referee: The difficulty level of this task can be modified downward if navigational aids, such as a compass or inertial locator, is used. Mishaps include going in the wrong direction or blundering into a guard patrol.

To pilot the GCarrier through the storm:
Difficult, Grav Vehicle, Sensor Ops, 2 min. (fateful)
Referee: Mishaps run the range from clipping a tree while flying too low to driving the vehicle into the ground. Flying the GCarrier back to the *Zesh* requires active sensors, because visual flight control is impossible. This will reveal its location to the pirates via the port's sensor array.

The pirates should be nipping at the character's heels throughout this event. Keep the pace fast and the tension high. The guards will use whatever vehicles are available to them to pursue the group. The two ships in Hangar 1 will be cold started and also join the pursuit (but this will take some time).

All of this will be played against the backdrop of the storm with its heavy snowfall, and booming thunder. Use these factors to make the PC's escape a chaotic, frantic event.

THE PIRATES' NUKES

The Tetrini pirate band has stolen a number of 5 kiloton nuclear warheads from another pirate band. Here are the specific stats for these warheads, their shielded carrying cases, and their triggers (locked inside a single shielded carrying case stored in a safe some distance from the warheads themselves).

Description	*Weight*	*Volume*	*Price*
TL 12 a-nuke warhead	5.0 kg	0.4 liter	Cr40,000
TL 12 shield case	15.0 kg	1.6 liter	Cr500
TL 12 a-nuke trigger	0.2 kg	0.01 liter	Cr10,000

These weapons are simple nuclear warheads, triggered by an induced implosion — a basic tech level 6 capability. However, these warheads were constructed using the best that tech level 12 has to offer, and as such are quite small and lightweight. They are every bit as deadly as their massive tech level 6 cousins if the triggers are installed in them. Without the triggers installed, the warheads are inert and harmless. Even exploding the warheads (as long as the triggers are not installed) will not cause them to detonate.

Detonating the Nuclear Warheads: This scenario is written so that stealing the warheads is the goal, rather than detonating them. Still, some errant PC group (or some mischievous referee) may want to detonate one or more of these weapons. For those reckless souls, here are the basics of doing such a dastardly deed.

Once a weapon has been armed by the installation of a trigger, the only way to detonate the warhead is a sudden concussion (such as that caused by dropping the warhead to the ground from an altitude of at least 100 meters, or as the result of being in the danger space of an explosion).

• ***Ground Blast:*** The most likely method of detonation in this adventure is the ground blast. For an air burst (100 meters elevation or greater), see the next section.

Crater: A ground blast produces a crater of 60 meters radius from the detonation location.

Primary Blast Radius: Anything within 50 meters of the center of the blast is completely vaporized. Anything from 51 to 100 meters is hit with 500 damage points and a penetration of 60; all vegetation and buildings are reduced to flaming debris.

Secondary Blast Radius: Anything from 101 meters to 500 meters is hit with 150 damage points and a penetration of 20. All vegetation and buildings in this range are blown down.

Tertiary Blast Radius: Anything from 501 to 800 meters must roll a routine task to avoid getting hit with 25 damage points at a penetration of 5. Add the armor value of any cover to the armor value of the potential target of the blast effect.

Induced Radiation: During the first thirty minutes of the warhead detonation, any living thing within an 800 meter radius of the blast receives 1 hit point of permanent damage for every minute of exposure. Thus an individual with a life force of 3/5 will be in a coma within 3 minutes of continued exposure, and will be dead in another 5 minutes.

After the thirty minutes, any living thing within 100 meters receives 1 hit point of damage for every 10 minutes of exposure. After one week, the crater remains radioactive for 1 year, and causes 1 hit point of permanent damage per hour of exposure. Protected individuals (combat environment suit, combat armor, battle dress, or vehicle) can freely move through radioactive areas.

• ***Air Burst:*** An air burst is only possible if the warhead is subjected to a concussion while still at least 100 meters in the air (one possibility is to install a radio detonated explosive device on the warhead and then drop it from a starship).

Crater: An air bust does not produce a crater.

Primary Blast Radius: Anything within 50 meters of the center of the blast is completely vaporized. Anything from 51 to 100 meters is hit with 500 damage points and a penetration of 60; all vegetation and buildings are reduced to flaming debris.

Secondary Blast Radius: Anything from 101 meters to 600 meters is hit with 150 damage points and a penetration of 20. All vegetation and buildings in this range are blown down.

Tertiary Blast Radius: Anything from 601 to 1200 meters must roll a routine task to avoid getting hit with 25 damage points at a penetration of 5. Add the armor value of any cover to the armor value of the potential target of the blast effect.

Induced Radiation: During the first thirty minutes of the warhead detonation, any living thing within a 1200 meter radius of the blast receives 1 hit point of permanent damage for every minute of exposure. Thus an individual with a life force of 3/5 will be in a coma within 3 minutes of continued exposure, and will be dead in another 5 minutes.

After the thirty minutes, any living thing within 100 meters receives 1 hit point of damage for every 10 minutes of exposure. After one week, the radioactivity dissipates enough that it no longer has a significant effect. Protected individuals (combat environment suit, combat armor, battle dress, or vehicle) can freely move through radioactive areas. •

12. RUN TO JUMP POINT
The PCs head out of the Tetrini System
Location is in space in the Tetrini system

Scene: The *Zeshliama* tops the cloud deck and continues to climb into the black, starlit sky. The ship shudders as its engines drive it upward. A warning sounds at the Sensor console and a tactical plot snaps up. A ship is diving out of orbit straight toward you.

Action: As in the GCarrier task above, getting the *Zeshliama* airborne requires the use of active sensors.

To safely lift off and climb above the storm:
Difficult, Pilot or Ship's Boat, Edu, 30 sec (fateful)
Referee: Mishaps are the same as those for the GCarrier task.

Once active sensors are used, the starport will detect them and vector the orbiting corsair into the area. The characters will have to fight their way to jump point as they are pursued by the pirate ship.

Barring a serious error on the part of the players, the group should win this encounter and escape. (Just as the pirates did at the opening of the adventure). Emergency repair tasks should be generated as needed to repair battle damage and permit the *Zeshliama* to continue its flight. (A failed repair task introduces the possibility of a misjump, an adventure in itself).

13. GOING HOME
Conclusion
Location is aboard a starship jumpspace

Scene: Carefully timed bursts of power flood the hull grid. There's a quick flash and the inky black of space quickly fades to the undulating grey of jump space. All readouts are normal. In a week you and the rest of the crew will reach Kdept, your first stop on the journey home.

Action: The return to Cossor is largely uneventful, barring refueling mishaps and referee imposed events. The characters will be given a hero's welcome upon their return to Cossor. If the crew performed particularly well, they may be rewarded with a knighthood, presented by Victoria herself. They'll be the first recipients, in the restored Duchy at least, of just such an honor.

Finally, putting one pirate band out of commission does not mean the Duchy is in the clear. There are other pirates and other threats to deal with in the future. Success in this adventure will make the characters prime candidates for future missions in the service of Victoria and Oasis Duchy.

LIBRARY DATA BACKGROUND

The Duchy of Oasis: The Duchy, which has its original roots in the obscure times of the Long Night, includes 44 worlds of Oasis and Wolf subsectors (subsectors K and L of Zarushagar sector). When the Third Imperium came on the scene, the Duchy worlds were reluctant to join the new empire. Their worlds, in their opinion, were doing just fine without any outside help. After much economic and political pressure, Cleon's ambassadors finally managed to get the worlds of the Duchy to become Imperial member worlds.

Many worlds of the old Duchy were never completely happy with the Third Imperium, and during the Ilelish Rebellions in the 400s, the Duchy tried to declare its independence once again. Emperor Martin II swiftly brought massive Imperial forces to bear, and the worlds reluctantly backed down. They had little choice in the matter, since their only other option was possible widespread destruction of their systems. His bloodless victory secure, Martin II also ordered the Oasis subsector capital moved to Megalmatree, and the Oasis system stripped of all political power at the Imperial level.

With the shattering of the Imperium and the various factions drawing their borders, the worlds of the old Duchy have fallen under Lucan's rule. The leaders of many worlds of the old Duchy, while giving lip service to Lucan's demands, have demonstrated a detached allegiance to him. On 032-1120, Duchess Victoria of Oasis subsector announced the reestablishment of Duchy of Oasis as "a coordinated effort by our worlds to band together and better serve emperor Lucan in these troubled times." She went on to say that the remaining Imperial reserve fleets in the Wolf and Oasis subsectors must stay here to protect the Duchy worlds from encroachment by Dulinor, Margaret, or the Solomani. Victoria stated that if Oasis is to survive, the worlds must band together to better meet these outside threats.

While some say the Duchess reestablishing the Duchy is a suspicious move, Lucan has to-date not reacted either for or against it.

The Pirates of Tetrini (*Silver Blade* band):

Starport Warden Nile Rutherford has made a deal with a starmerc company turned pirate. He supplies a base of operations and a port through which stolen goods can be laundered in exchange for a cut of the loot. Rutherford has managed to keep the whole thing a secret from anyone outside the port. For those employed by the Warden, liberal amounts of money or threats of violence are enough to ensure their silence.

The presence of the nuclear weapons has been kept secret from Rutherford. The pirates want to "renegotiate" their deal with the Warden and, if possible, become the new government of Tetrini. If through the actions of the characters the existence of the weapons comes to light, port enforcers loyal to the Rutherford will take action against the pirates and the whole scheme will come apart.

Wolf Subsector: Subsector K of Zarushagar is a sort of borderland between various factions — Lucan to coreward/trailing, Dulinor to spinward and the Solomani to rimward.

Many of the worlds in Wolf remain non-aligned with respect to outside powers. Merchant travel through the area has become sporadic because of the number of pirates, corsairs and commerce raiders of various loyalties who roam at will. Naval forces from the Loyal and Vengeance Fleets as well as the Federation of Daibei also visit the subsector on a irregular basis.

LIBRARY DATA: TETRINI
Tetrini (1823 Zarushagar)
B876433-C NI 812 LI K0V M9D

Mean orbital radius: 0.721 AU, Orbital period: 235.2 standard days, Rotation period: 38 hrs., 35 mins., Axial tilt: 26 degrees, Eccentricity: .25, Diameter: 13,459 kilometers, Density, mass and gravity: all 0.92, No satellites, Hydrographic percentage: 60% (Water), Atmosphere: Oxygen-nitrogen mix with low oxygen taint, Atmospheric pressure: 0.92, Mean surface temperature: 6 degrees C, Population (as of 1110): 8,657.

The population is scattered among two dozen communities, the largest of which is Alius, the planetary capital. Located 300 km north of Alius is the starport, Port Griffen. It is home to 750 people.

Tetrini has no military forces of its own.

The remainder of the system is unihabited. •

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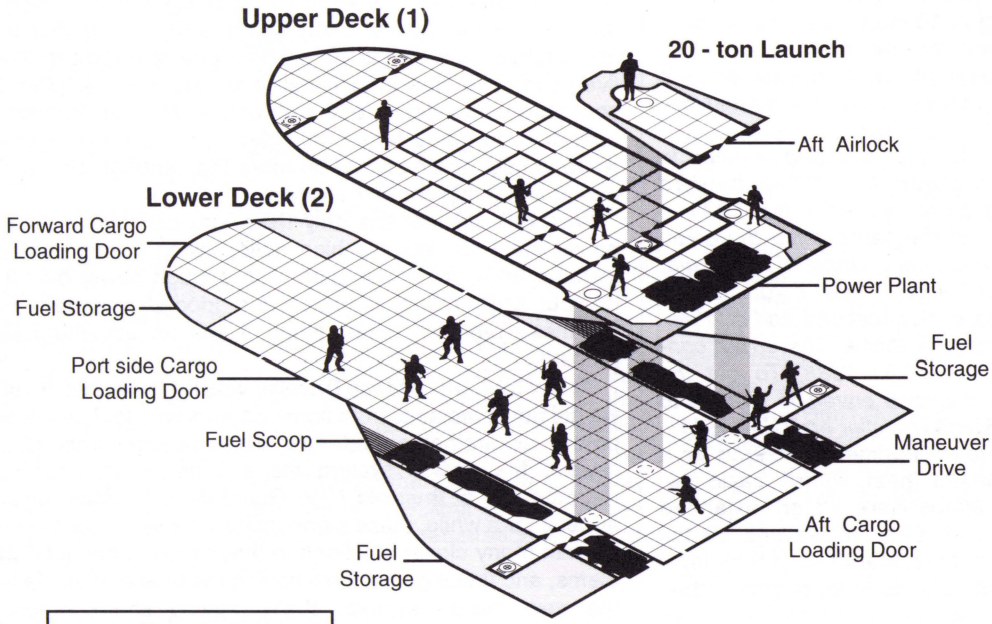

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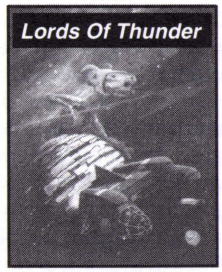

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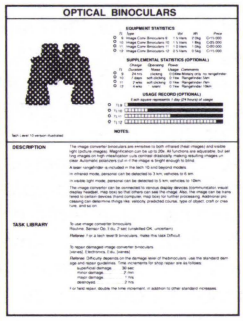

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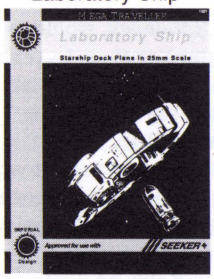

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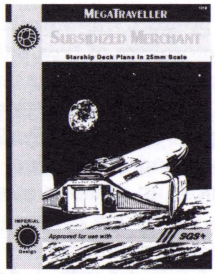

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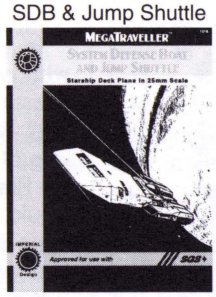

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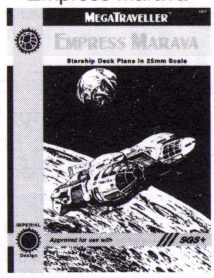

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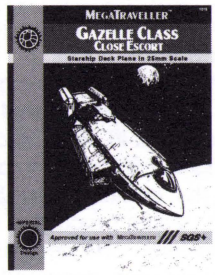

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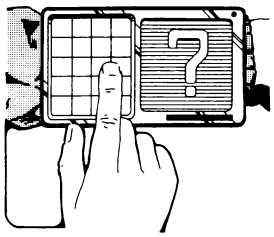

Traveller Q&A

OFFICIAL ANSWERS TO YOUR QUESTIONS

I have several questions about starship design. What are the detriments to using TL9 antigrav maneuver units? They are cheaper, cost less, weigh less, and use less power than thrusters, so why use thrusters? And what kinds of environmental controls are needed in a starship? Why not make one package for starships? Do inertial compensators have to be installed? Finally, is there any way to reduce the power draw on weapons since they are only needed during combat? It seems like a waste to power your weapons for 30 days. — L.H.

You do have several questions, but they are all good ones.

First, why use thrusters when antigrav maneuver units cost less, weigh less, and use less power than thrusters? An antigrav unit requires a gravity well to push against, so an antigrav maneuver drive is less efficient at 10 diameters and beyond. The effective maneuver number of the craft drops by 50% at 10 diameters and beyond. For example, a maneuver drive–2 drops to a maneuver–1, and maneuver–1 drops to maneuver–0.5. Thruster units do not suffer these effects.

(Incidentally, the answer to this first question is given in the MegaTraveller errata as a clarification. While the third edition of the MegaTraveller rules (published in mid-1988 — if you've purchased your copy of the game since then, you probably have the third edition) cleans up most of the errata, getting the errata sheets is still a good idea if you haven't done so. About half the errata is clarifications and suggestions, and it is worth getting just for those. The errata consists of two handouts, both issued in 1988. To get the errata, send a self-addressed stamped envelope (SASE) to us and request the complete MegaTraveller errata. — Ed.)

Starships areas require these environmental controls as a bare minimum: basic environment (heat, lights), basic life-support (sealed environment, atmosphere, water), extended life-support (food, waste recycle). Grav plates and inertial compensators are not required. Most starships of tech level 10 or greater, however, typically include at least grav plates. Most TL10+ Imperial designs require inertial compensators if the ship has a maneuver drive greater than 1 gee thrust.

Your question about a standard package for a starship's environment is a good idea — in fact, many of the gamers who do a lot of starship designs have done just that. They have taken things they like to commonly install in a starship and have made up a collection of "packages." I encourage you to create packages for your favorite mixes of craft hardware.

In fact, Mike Jackson (author of *Budget Grav Vehicles,* last issue) told me that creating packages for the things he likes to put in starship designs allows him to do several ship designs in an evening of TV by just working on a design during the commercials. Some of our readers have said the craft design process is so intricate that it takes them forever to do even *one* design. While I agree the design system is involved (we designed it that way deliberately to make it more challenging and realistic than *High Guard),* Mike appears to have the complexity problem licked. And Mike isn't the only one, several of the more expert ship designers (many of them HIWG members) use similar short-cut techniques. Watch new *MegaTraveller Journal* for more information on ship design short-cuts.

Here are a couple of design pointers that should help you out. First, there is no need to install basic life-support or extended life-support in the ship's fuel tanks. If you do install grav plates and/or inertial compensators, you need to install them in the *entire* hull volume. You need to install basic environment in the entire hull volume as well, including the fuel tanks. You need something to keep the fuel load at a constant temperature — plus when inspecting empty fuel tanks, lighting is a tremendous help. Grav plates and inertial compensators are "gross" items, and do not have a fine enough "focus" for installation in a specific ship location to have any real meaning.

The concept of "expert designer tricks" leads us to the answer on your question about a 30-day fuel supply for weapons. Another trick the expert ship designers are using is "booster" power plants. Scott Olson is the first gamer who approached us with this idea, and it one of the most clever I've seen. The idea is to install a separate power plant for your weapon systems, one with only a 24 hour duration of operation. In game terms, this gives you 72 turns of active weapon use, which should be more than enough endurance during a starship combat session.

Weapons are not the only thing you can use a booster power plant for. Want a high agility rating during combat? Install a 24-hour booster plant with enough power output to up your agility rating. Sounds like a good ship upgrade during these rebellion times. Hmm, I see an adventure idea forming...

At any rate, when MegaTraveller was first released in 1987, we did get complaints from some gamers who told us the new power requirements and new mass requirements of the revised the design system made it nearly impossible to recreate any of their old *High Guard* designs. After thinking about it for a while, these same gamers have started to come up with many clever solutions to these"insurmountable" problems, and these gamers are having the time of their life with the new design system. We're seeing some ingenious designs appearing these days, and the new, more detailed design system is what is making that possible. So hang in there with your starship design efforts and don't be afraid to experiment. And we are always open to any new design tricks you may come up with. —*Joe D. Fugate Sr.*

In your product *World Builder's Handbook,* wouldn't worlds with an atmosphere of type 0 (vacuum) or type A+ (exotic and worse) be more likely to alter their atmosphere using terraforming? Why don't you have DMs for those atmosphere types in step 13 on page 68 of *World Builder's?* — D.C.

I like your kind of question, because it indicates what you would think is an obvious oversight on our part, but in truth there is a *very good* reason why we did what we did with atmospheric terraforming.

When we worked with J. Andrew Keith on *Grand Survey,* the original source of *World Builder's Handbook* (along with *Grand Census),* we thought long and hard on the terraforming issue. We decided our most basic assumption needed to be that the world UWPs as given, must *already include* the effects of terraforming. This way, we could avoid altering any existing world UWP. If we had opted for altering world

UWPs, the *World Builder's* terraforming rules could suddenly invalidate thousands of the UWPs for worlds in the Imperium. This was not a good idea, to say the least.

You can thus see how the *marginally good atmosphere worlds* are the most likely ones to have already conducted (or to be currently conducting) atmospheric terraforming. Given this assumption, it becomes obvious why the type 1,2 (trace) or type 3,4 (very thin) atmosphere worlds have the greatest likelihood of having already performed atmospheric terraforming. The worst atmospheres (type 9+) have not yet done any atmospheric terraforming, and therefore they have negative die modifiers.

So the key question is: "based on the current UWP stats, which worlds are the most likely to have already done atmospheric terraforming?" Your question is a very different one, since it asks "which worlds *need to do* atmospheric terraforming?" — which is *not* the question *World Builder's Handbook* tries to answer with the atmospheric terraforming stat.

In all cases where terraforming is checked in *World Builder's Handbook,* the terraforming is assumed to have already occurred — either as the result of a completed project or a project currently underway. A world may have future terraforming projects in mind, but the *World Builder's* stat doesn't indicate future efforts not yet attempted.
— *Joe D. Fugate Sr.*

What is the penetration for an energy weapon with a danger space? An FGMP-15 has a penetration of 34/2. If the penetration is reduced to 17, what is the penetration for the explosion? — P.M.

As explained in the *Players' Manual* on page 73 under "Group Hits", penetration is halved for each square of distance from the target square. Use the penetration *for the target square* as the "full" penetration when computing group hits for others in the danger space of an explosion. In the example you give, the penetration of the FGMP-15 in the target square is 17. Therefore, the penetration of the explosion one square away is half of 17, or 8 (drop fractions). Two squares away, the penetration from the explosion is halved again to 4. Three squares away (the limit of the danger space on an FGMP-15 explosion), the penetration is halved again to 2. — *Joe D. Fugate Sr.*

In the section on interpersonal tasks (page 45), the task "to evaluate an individual's susceptibility to bribery" is listed as being "impossible". Is this correct? — R.P.

I always like to get task system questions like this one. Before I give you the answer, let's digress for a moment and talk about the philosophy of the task system itself.

We originally invented the task system out of frustration with the rules books. We got tired of having to look up die rolls or having to deal with huge lists of die modifiers for some die roll. Many possible uses of skills were not covered at all. We wanted a standardized way of presenting players with tasks that could be used in a "fast and loose" fashion, on the fly, by the seat of the pants. No rule books: just keep the adventure moving and keep up the excitement.

We have found the task system to be ideal for this type of gaming. In fact, we've had situations in gaming tournaments where a drafted referee only knew the task system and the basic Traveller background. These referees had never read the Traveller rule books, and yet they ran very successful Traveller sessions with players who knew Traveller well. Interestingly, the players' remarks at the end of the session, without fail, have included comments stating "that referee sure knew the Traveller rules..."

Recently, we have been thinking it might have been better to leave out tasks in published adventures, and thereby *force* you to use the task system more the way it is intended to be used: make up the tasks as you go. The concept of slavish, religious devotion to the rules, or of making long lists of predefined tasks as a reference is somewhat counterproductive, I think. The tasks presented in the rule books are meant as examples. Try running a session without the rule books sometime — just make up the tasks as you go along — yes, even the combat tasks. As long as the players agree that the task you give them is reasonable, that's all that really matters.

You might be surprised to see how we run playtest sessions here at DGP. We tend to ignore the rulebooks and define tasks completely on the fly. I'll say one thing about our sessions — they rarely bog down, and they sure are a lot of fun.

Okay, let's get back to your question about the "susceptibility of taking a bribe" task. Notice that this task lets you guess how likely you can pull off bribing the guy. This task doesn't cover actually trying to offer the guy a bribe, mind you, it just suggests how open people are to circumventing the system. On a no law world, there is no "system" per se, so impossible is the correct difficulty for a no law world. As the world's law level increases, by the time you get to extreme law (with a system of manifold legal complexities), this task definition implies you can easily tell who is perfectly willing to circumvent the system and who would gladly take a bribe to cut out all the garbage.

But this is only one way of looking at how to administer a bribe, and thus is a suggestion. If you think it doesn't make sense, then chances are your players won't think it makes sense either. Using this suggestion as a springboard, define some tasks for you players that they like. That's really all there is to it.

So if you don't like it, change it. Some of you rules hounds may be shocked by this, but I've always felt a fundamental idea of the task system is there is no such thing as "the one and only" task definition for any task. So relax, and define some of your own tasks when you don't like the published suggestions. We'll be the first to admit our task suggestions don't always work — but then, they never were intended to *always* work. — *Joe D. Fugate Sr.* •

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The Face Behind the Claw

THE REBEL REPORTER
—Transcribed by Mike Mikesh and James Holden

The following article is transcript excerpted from the holovideo "The Aslan: Warriors or Settlers?" by Waufuah, an Imperial Aslan. In her video, Waufuah points out how many citizens of the Domain see the Aslan as warrior-invaders, when in fact their primary method of advance is as "land squatters" or "settlers" rather than as invaders. In the interest of correcting these misconceptions about the Aslan, here is Waufuah's insightful report.

As citizens of the Domain of Deneb in this age of rebellion, we find several threats at our borders. The Vargr harry our domain's coreward borders, having already cut us off from the Imperial interior by overrunning Corridor Sector. To rimward, rumors of Aslan encroachment continue to dominate the news. And our traditional enemies of the famous Frontier Wars — the Zhodani — while quiet for the moment, lurk at our doorstep.

What of the Aslan encroachments? How true are these stories? Are the Aslan really the towering warriors, overrunning and looting world after world on our rimward borders? As an Aslan myself, and as a loyal Imperial citizen, I believe I am uniquely qualified to address these questions, and to perhaps shed some light on this so-called rimward invasion of the Aslan and to sort out the truth from the fiction. In these chaotic times, understanding what is truth and what is fiction can be of great help in providing at least some peace of mind.

First, let's start with the basics. The Aslan have a fundamental cultural preference for land as the best inheritance for their children. This leads them to face an overpopulation problem — albeit a somewhat artificial one, brought on by their culture. Ages ago, they crossed the Great Rift to find new worlds, establishing the region in Trojan Reach sector we today call the Aslan Colonies. Ever since then, their second sons, or *ihatei,* continue to arrive in this region from across the Great Rift.

A common misconception is that this pressure to find new worlds is so great the Aslan *must* spill into Imperial territory. This view portrays the Aslan as longing to capture Imperial worlds and carve them up among their second sons. With the Imperium being torn apart by a devastating civil war, this view reasons that the land-hungry Aslan have seized this opportunity to start a full-scale invasion of the Domain of Deneb's rimward flank.

In truth, the Aslan motivation for entering the Imperium is social and economic — rarely do the Aslan enter a new system for only military reasons. It is important to understand this distinction, for if you do understand this, you suddenly see why the Aslan "encroaching" on the Domain's rimward flanks are *civilians,* not soldiers.

This is consistent with the Aslan way of thinking. The Aslan prefer a peaceful advance into new territory, with their goal being to settle undeveloped land or worlds. This is in stark contrast to the Vargr preference for highly settled and developed worlds — since the Vargrs' standard tactic is to loot and plunder the worlds they take. The Aslan seek development potential, while the Vargr prefer to overrun a system purely for its booty.

BEGINNINGS OF THE ASLAN EXPANSION

To better understand the current Aslan expansion, it is helpful to consider the historical context.

In the decades before 1100, media records tell us of the increasing number of Aslan products available in Trojan Reach Sector. Aslan technical representatives and merchants became increasingly common. Lured by the strength of the Imperial economy, the Aslan established a vigorous trade with the Imperium.

Interestingly, some of the precedent for these recent Aslan expansions date back to the border wars between the Aslan and the Imperium, a conflict which took place over 800 years ago. The treaty ending that war, the Peace of Ftahalr (signed in 380), specified as one of its articles that the Aslan must refrain from placing investments in activities or property on Imperial worlds.

In the early centuries following this agreement, such a stipulation was not a problem since Aslan clans owned no property among Imperial worlds, and Aslan companies

owned no businesses in the Imperium except those directly involved in trade with the Aslan Colonies of Trojan Reach. The Aslan of Trojan Reach watched carefully as the full effect of the rebellion began to be felt in the financial districts of Imperial worlds in the Domain. For instance, stocks plummeted on the Regina Stock Exchange, and an increasing number of businesses moved to curtail operations and sell off assets.

By 1117, there was a dramatic increase in Aslan investments on *Imperial* worlds in Trojan Reach, and several worlds reported a dramatic increase in Aslan "land squatters" on their worlds. When asked how they felt about violating an article in the Peace of Ftahalr, these Aslan replied "the Peace of Ftahalr deals with realms trailing the Great Rift, not realms spinward of the Rift."

The arrival of increasing numbers of Aslan and their investment in local financial markets alarmed many Imperial citizens in Trojan Reach. The paranoid attitudes of a few influential locals set the stage for heightened fears in the months and years ahead.

It is inaccurate to say the Aslan were universally viewed as "invaders". On several worlds, the increased Aslan involvement was welcomed by the general population. The Aslans' timely investments and their efforts to develop otherwise unused land did much to stabilize the fragile economies of worlds in Trojan Reach sector.

IMISAA'S RESCUE

As an example, it is helpful to look at the world Imisaa (Trojan Reach 2916 B520867-6).

The economy of this poor, non-agricultural world was supported almost entirely by local manufacturing concerns financed by offworld investors. Many local workers began to fear for their jobs as the economic effects of Strephon assassination began to be felt.

One worker, Bran Veri, a production supervisor of an electronics factory near the world's main starport, had this to say, "My firm quickly felt the economic effects of the Imperium's breakup as the supply of interstellar funds began to dry up and interstellar trade dropped off. There was talk of major cutbacks, layoffs, plant closures, and so on. I was afraid my days were numbered.

"I warmly received news of financial offers from the Aslan, after all, they were no strangers to this region. The Aslan promised increased offworld trade and even offered to buy and upgrade some of our obsolete industrial centers. They also offered to buy large tracts of wasteland for development. To top everything off, they promised to accept the authority of our government. How could we turn them down? It was the perfect deal."

Many Imisaan businesses accepted similar offers with little pause, and within months, the world saw visible signs of renewed prosperity. Aslan traders called on the world with increasing frequency. All the while, thousands of Aslan were arriving to build new settlements, some in the most remote, poorly explored regions of Imisaa's surface.

TROUBLE AT FIST

The Aslan moved to assist many Imperial systems of Trojan Reach in a manner similar to the way they had acted on Imisaa. In time, these Aslan activities generated increasing friction and controversy. Locals increasingly saw the Aslan as unexpected intruders, sometimes actively resisting their presence.

Racial prejudice flared in some locales. In many cases, the locals forced the Aslan into the rundown areas of cities. Uninformed humans accused the Aslan of violent, cruel, and unhealthy habits. Businessmen railed against "unfair alien competition."

On Fist (Trojan Reach 2918 B789430-C), the native human inhabitants overthrew their government for allowing the Aslan on their world. The original regime had tried in vain to appease and placate the Aslan, earning the disgust and scorn of many human citizens. The new government ordered the Aslan to leave, and open warfare erupted when the Aslan refused to go.

"The Aslan 'encroaching' on the Domain's rimward flanks are *civilians,* not soldiers."

THE INTELIAN CONFLICT

At about the same time as the Fist revolt, still more turmoil developed in the Intelia system (Trojan Reach 2612 C474653-6).

Here, Aslan companies bought out a number of failing meat packing companies. Plant owner Kavin Legoru (a human native to Intelia) tells what happened next.

"Instead of hiring humans," Legoru says, "the new Aslan owners gave jobs to Aslan of poorer means. This was better, the new Aslan owners declared, since now these destitute Aslan would be able to buy property of their own.

"Unfortunately," Legoru observes, "we did not like the fact that thousands of jobs held by humans were being threatened by this new Aslan policy. We demanded the Aslan immediately transfer the control of their companies to management by the Agricultural Conglomerate. "

The Aslan female Eiyhaalilr, one of the new Aslan plant managers, says the humans overreacted. "We projected [our policy] should affect but a few hundred human-held jobs, and it is better better for a community to not have Aslan relying on free handouts as their only support. Where the humans got the idea that thousands of their jobs were at stake does not make sense to us."

The Aslan held companies refused to capitulate and violence has erupted between Aslan and humans, and the situation on Intelia has yet to recover.

BATTLES FOR LAND

As human-Aslan relations continue to break down in several systems, the local Aslan on these worlds began to request clan warships and troop carriers to come to their aid. These were soon confronted by the Imperial Navy and the Marines, escalating things further.

The Imperial rout of 1117-1118 brought many Imperial worlds to question the Navy's ability to deliver protection to them against outsiders. The prospects of alien domination frightens many Imperial humans. With or without the Navy, a majority of worlds in Trojan Reach and the Spinward Marches have begun to turn away any kind of Aslan offers of investment.

Lakht Aorlakht has repeatedly stated that "negotiations with 'an empire without a leader' (referring to the Shattered Imperium) are not a reasonable alternative at this time."

FLEET ADMIRAL TRANATHIAF'S VISIT

When Fleet Admiral Tranathiaf visited the domain's rimward frontier in 1119, he enlisted the services of Imperial Diplomatic Corps representatives. When asked about the visit, Admiral Tranathiaf replied, "The Trojan Reach situation is a complicated one, with many events happening very fast. The best way to get an effective plan for dealing with the Aslan problem is to see the situation first hand."

After the visit Tranathiaf's office released a summary of their findings. In this summary, Tranathiaf lists several options for containing the Aslan incursions along the domain's border in Trojan Reach.

One obvious means Tranathiaf gives is use mass military force. Another option Tranathiaf discusses is negotiation, although he admits this could prove to be difficult since the only central authority figure among the Aslan clans of Trojan Reach, Lakht Aorlakht, is anything but sympathetic.

To make things worse, Aorlakht's power over the Aslan is, limited at best, Tranathiaf states. Separate treaties would have to be negotiated with each clan or company involved. And as Tranathiaf rightly observes, each is bound by a different set of alliances and rivalries.

Lakht Aorlakht has repeatedly stated that "negotiations with 'an empire without a leader' (referring to the Shattered Imperium) are not a reasonable alternative at this time."

Recently, the Aslan Eakhtiyho clan has moved in to provide assistance to the Aorlakht., reports Tranathiaf. Eakhtiyho-built ships have been arriving in the Domain, and the Eakhtiyho have offered support to those Aslan already in the region.

All in all, Tranathiaf's report exhibits an exceptional grasp of the situation. One would hope his clear understanding of the problem will lead to an effective and equitable solution for everyone involved.

THE FUTURE

Fortunately, our domain is not without its Aslan friends. Yet another Aslan clan, the Ikhtealyo, have long been involved in trade beyond the Hierate's borders in our Domain. They have profited greatly by having good relations with Imperial humans and have repeatedly stated their desire for "an amicable solution to our peoples' disputes in Trojan Reach."

Nevertheless, a diplomatic solution still seems uncertain. Many feel our best hope lies with re-establishing military superiority in Trojan Reach, and negotiating a peace with the Aslan from a position of strength. While this brute force approach has sometimes worked before, I contend we ought to learn a lesson from history. The Imperium won the Peace of Ftahalr not by overwhelming military might, but by finally adhering to the Aslan standards of "honorable combat."

In fact, I think we ought to consider a drastically different approach: assimilation. Earlier Aslan "invaders" have always sworn loyalty to the Imperial nobility — there is no reason to think today's Aslan would do otherwise. Although often segregated geographically, the Aslan have become valued Imperial citizens on a multitude of Imperial worlds, and the Emperor's Aslan Guard serves to remind us of this fact.

If the invading Aslan of modern times were granted citizenship, I believe they would bolster the domain's underpopulated rimward fringe. Left without the benefit of reinforcements from the Imperial Core, our Deneb Domain must look for new aid in defending its borders. The steadfast Aslan — in sharp contrast to the brash, thoughtless Vargr to coreward — would make ideal border guards.

Yet another fact suggests the "citizenship" solution needs serious consideration — the Darrian example. Aslan arrived in the Darrian Confederation in 585 and fought for the Darrians against the Zhodani in the first two Frontier Wars. Rewarded with land, loyal Aslan today comprise nearly a tenth of the Darrian populace.

If our unfamiliarity with the Aslan proves a hindrance, Aslan consultants from Darrian could prove invaluable. The Darrians would be the ideal mediators between the domain and the Aorlakht, with impartial Aslan statesmen from Darrian acting as the observers and referees common to major disputes among Aslan. •

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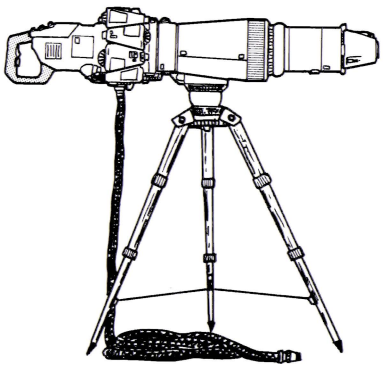
LASER DRILL



Tech level 9 version illustrated

EQUIPMENT STATISTICS

	TL	Type	Power Usage	Vol	Wt	Price
O	9	Laser Drill-9	10 kw	4.0 liters	10 kg	Cr4,250
O	14	Laser Drill-14	9 kw	3.0 liters	6 kg	Cr3,500

AMMO STATISTICS

	TL	Clip Size	Round	Sig	Recoil	Danger Space	Weight	Price
O	9	200 rds	powerpak	med	low	—	8 kg	Cr60
O	14	300 rds	powerpak	med	low	—	5 kg	Cr60

med sig=some light generated; easy to spot if fired in darkness
low recoil=does not cause disorientation when fired in a zero-G environment

ACCESSORIES

	Item	Weight	Volume	Price
O	Tripod Mount	1 kg	2 liters	Cr250

CUSTOMIZING NOTES:

DESCRIPTION

A heavy-duty, semi-portable laser used for mining, the laser drill is a tripod-mounted projector much more powerful than a laser rifle. It is also more cumbersome and far less accurate, being intended for work at short ranges.

A power pack – not interchangable with that used on personal laser weapons – con be hooked to the drill, providing one hour of intermittent use (or about 200 shots in combat). A cable can be run from either a portable fusion generator or the power plant of a nearby vehicle. This will allow the drill to be used for as long as the external source supplies it with power.

TASK LIBRARY

Type	Max Range	C*	S*	M*	L*	VL*	D *	Hit Dmg
TL9	Dist	S/30	R/15	F/8	F/4	I/2	I/1	300
TL14	Dist	S/40	R/20	F/10	F/5	I/2	I/1	350

*for the range given, hit difficulty/penetration is listed.

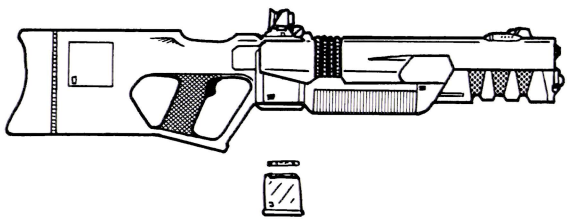
To repair a damaged laser drill:
[varies], Electronic, Dex, [varies]

Referee: Difficulty depends on the damage level of the gun; use the standard damage and repair guidelines. Time increments for shop repair are as follows:

superficial damage..... 6 min
minor damage.....45 min
major damage..... 4 hrs
destroyed..... 8 hrs

For field repair, apply the standard difficulty increases.

ACCELERATOR RIFLE



Tech level 13 version illustrated

CUSTOMIZING NOTES:

EQUIPMENT STATISTICS

	TL	Type	Vol	Wt	Price
O	9	Accelerator Rifle-9	2.5 liters	2.5 kg	Cr900
O	13	Accelerator Rifle-13	2.2 liters	1.9 kg	Cr900

AMMO STATISTICS

	TL	Clip Size	Round	Sig	Recoil	Danger Space	Weight	Price
O	9	15 rds	slug	low	low/R	—	0.5 kg	Cr25
O	13	15 rds	slug	low	low/R	—	0.5 kg	Cr20

low sig=subsonic round generates noise & light only after secondary ignition
low recoil=does not cause disorientation when fired in zero-G

AMMO USAGE RECORD (OPTIONAL)

Each square represents one round

O TL9: ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

O TL13: ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

DESCRIPTION

Designed specifically for use in a zero-G environment, the accelerator rifle has proven to be a favorite combat weapon among marines and starmercs. It fires a 6mm, 5 gram bullet at an initial muzzle velocity of 100 to 150 meters per second – considerably subsonic. After leaving the barrel, the round is accelerated by a secondary propellant to velocities of 700 to 800 meters per second. By using this two-stage method, the accelerator rifle round can achieve reasonable velocities without burdening the user with a significant recoil.

Changing the weapon's 15-round clip takes a character one combat round. Naturally, in its intended zero-G combat environment, the accelerator rifle's maximum range, like that of all other slug throwers, is effectively "very distant". However, the difficulty levels to hit the target at a given range still apply.

TASK LIBRARY

Type	Round	Max Range	C*	S*	M*	L*	Hit Dmg
TL9	slugs	Medium	R/3	R/3	D/3	–	3
TL13	slugs	Medium	R/3	R/3	R/3	–	3

*for the range given, hit difficulty/penetration is listed.

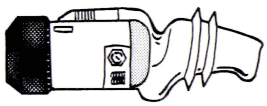
To repair a damaged accelerator rifle:
[varies], Mechanical, Dex, [varies]

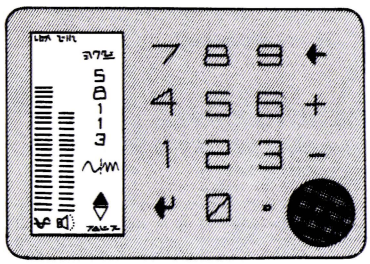
Referee: Difficulty depends on the damage level of the gun; use the standard damage and repair guidelines. Time increments for shop repair are as follows:

superficial damage.....3 min
minor damage.....10 min
major damage.....2.5 hrs
destroyed.....5 hrs

For field repair, apply the standard difficulty increases.

SOUND AMPLIFICATION EARPIECE





Advanced Tech level 11 version illustrated

EQUIPMENT STATISTICS

	TL	Type	Vol	Wt	Price
O	9	Sound Amp Earpiece-9	0.1 liters	0.08 kg	Cr150
O	11	Sound Amp Earpiece-11	0.08 liters	0.06 kg	Cr100
O	11	Advanced SAE-11	0.3 liters	0.2 kg	Cr300
O	14	Advanced SAE-14	0.25 liters	0.1 kg	Cr250

SUPPLEMENTAL STATISTICS (OPTIONAL)

	TL	Charge Duration	Operating Noise	Power Usage	Comments
O	9	1 day	none	0.01 kw	fixed sensitivity & freq. range
O	11	7 days	none	0.01 kw	fixed sensitivity & freq. range
O	11	7 days	none	0.02 kw	with tuning remote
O	14	30 days	none	0.01 kw	with tuning remote

USAGE RECORD (OPTIONAL)

Each square represents 1 day (24 hours) of usage

O TL9: ☐

O TL11: ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

O TL14: ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

CUSTOMIZING NOTES:

DESCRIPTION

Primarily used in situations where stealth is desired, the sound amplification earpiece provides greatly enhanced sound gathering capabilities to the user. The advanced models have tunable sensitivity, enabling the user to detect sounds up to 100 times fainter than the human ear can detect. A saftey override protects the listener from potentially damaging volumes by adjusting the amplitude to lower levels.

In addition to its sound amplification capabilities, the TL11+ models can translate frequencies beyond human hearing into meaningful sounds. This feature can prove useful when intereacting with alien species exhibiting a higher or lower vocal range.

Even within the applicable tech levels, there are a variety of models available. The more advanced ones feature a programming remote, which fits on the belt, in a pocket, or pouch. This remote manipulates various features. Beyond controling standard settings such as sensitivity and frequency range, the remote can be programmed to screen out selected sounds or to detect only specific ones.

TASK LIBRARY

To use a sound amplification earpiece:
Simple, Int, [varies], safe

Referee: Roll only when the character is attempting to discern the content or character of a specific sound or message.

To tune the earpiece (via remote) to either delete or focus in on a specific noise:
Routine, Electronics, Int, 3 sec, safe

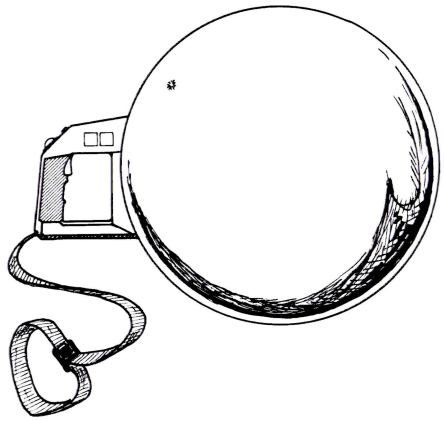
To repair a damaged earpiece:
[varies], Electronics, Edu, [varies]

Referee: Difficulty depends on the damage level: use the standard damage and repair guidelines. Time increments for shop repair are as follows:

superficial damage..... 1 min
minor damage ..... 5 min
major damage ..... 2 hrs
destroyed ..... 5 hrs

For field repair, double the time increment, in addition to other standard increases.

HAND PROPULSION UNIT



Tech level 12 version illustrated

CUSTOMIZING NOTES:

EQUIPMENT STATISTICS

	TL	Type	Vol	Wt	Price
O	7	Hand Propulsion Unit-7	4 liters	2 kg	Cr1,000
O	12	Hand Propulsion Unit-12	2 liters	1 kg	Cr700
O	15	Hand Propulsion Unit-15	5 liters	2 kg	Cr1,000

SUPPLEMENTAL STATISTICS (OPTIONAL)

	TL	Charge Duration	Operating Noise	Power Usage	Comments
O	7	20 burns	hiss	0.01 kw	uses compressed air
O	12	60 burns	hiss	0.01 kw	uses compressed air
O	15	12 hours	hum	0.01 kw	handheld thruster

USAGE RECORD (OPTIONAL)

Each square represents 1 directional burn

O TL7: ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

O TL12: ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

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Each square represents 1 hour of operation

O TL15: ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

DESCRIPTION

A hand-held, low power jet, the hand propulsion unit is used to maneuver during EVA activities. In the lower tech units, the device operates by expelling compressed gases. Though bulkier, the tech level 15 unit is much cleaner in operation, using thruster technology.

Each "burn" provides an acceleration increase of one band per turn.

TASK LIBRARY

To use a hand propulsion unit:
Difficult,Zero-G Env, Int, [varies], hazardous

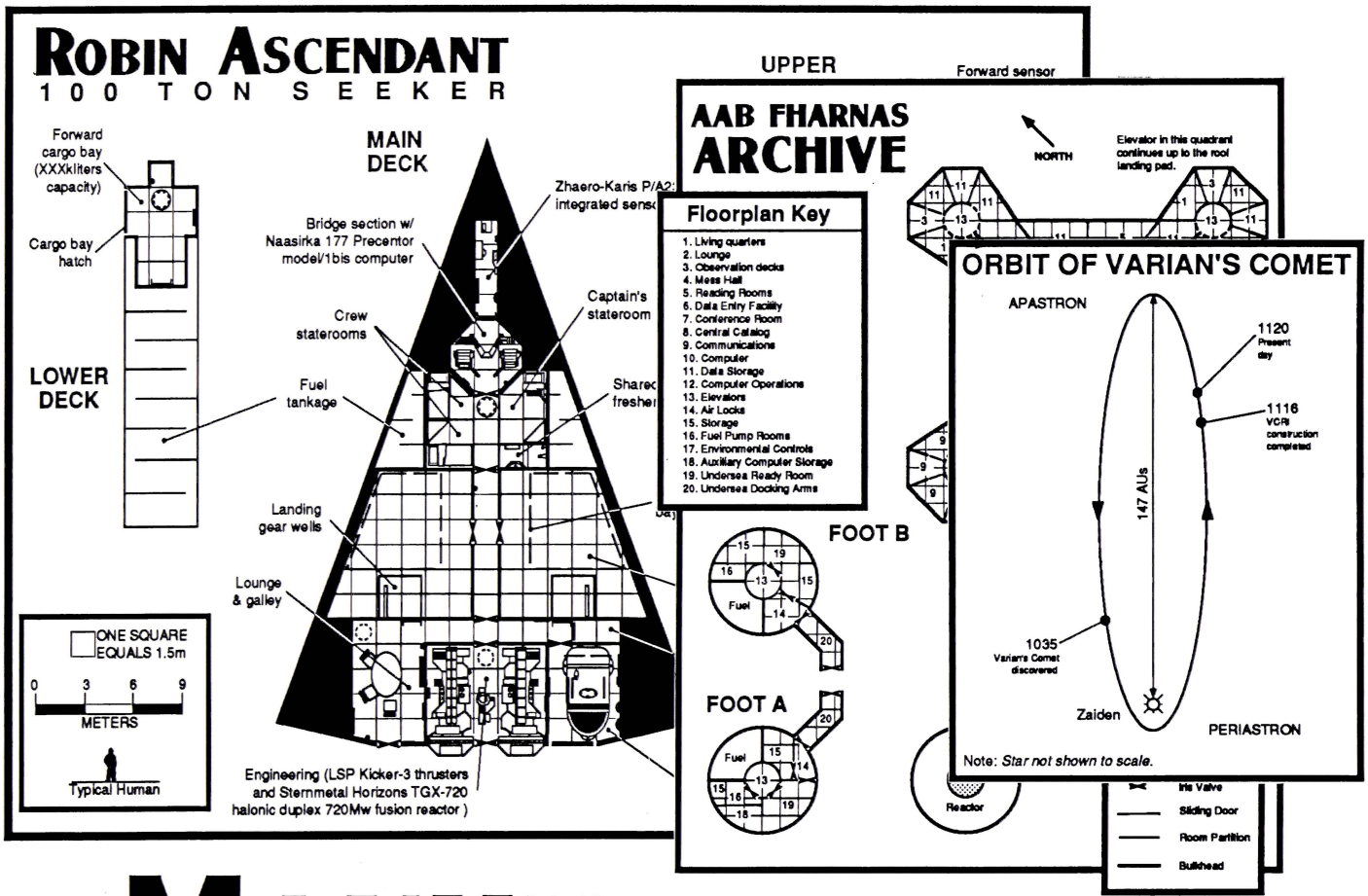
Referee: Roll when a specific vector or target is chosen, or when precise maneuvers are attempted.

To repair a hand propulsion unit:
[varies], Electronics, Edu, [varies]

Referee: Difficulty depends on the damage level: use the standard damage and repair guidelines. Time increments for shop repair are as follows:

superficial damage..... 1 min
minor damage..... 5 min
major damage..... 2 hrs
destroyed..... 5 hrs

For field repair, double the time increment, in addition to other standard increases.



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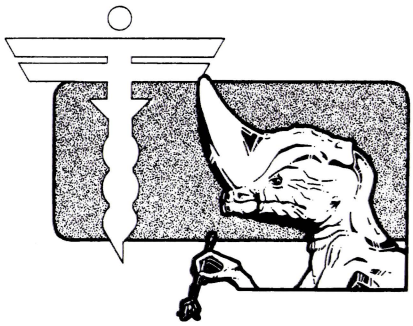


Suspended Animation

MEDICAL DIGEST
—by Mike Mikesh and James Holden

Few miracles of medical science have found as much use outside the hospital as suspended animation. From their beginning with chilling the body during lengthy surgery, suspension techniques have evolved into an invaluable aid to space travel.

Imperial science makes possible two basic forms of suspension: hibernation and freezing. Hibernation lowers metabolic rates to minimal levels, while freezing stops them altogether.

HIBERNATION

Hibernation first becomes practical at tech level 9. It can be achieved through either active or passive means.

Active Hibernation: This type of hibernation involves a special container for the occupant — a chill berth. This enclosure induces and maintains a state of hibernation. At the same time, it monitors the individual's suppressed vital signs. Drugs, chemical balances, and body temperature all play a complicated and interactive role.

Installing someone into a chill berth is a rather involved process at the lowest tech levels. A medic must attach sensors to various parts of the body, insert intravenous tubes, affix electrodes to run a weak current through the brain, and monitor the occupant as he is slowly cooled to near freezing.

This procedure rapidly grows simpler at higher tech levels, however. By tech 11, no external attachments to the occupant are needed, unless hibernation is to last longer than 60 days.

Passive Hibernation: In contrast, this type of hibernation requires no external life support or special environment. Instead, fast drug — also first introduced at tech level 9 — slows body processes sixty-fold. Although other compounds are commonly found to cause a death-like state of hibernation by most societies below tech level 9, none matches the safety and regularity of fast drug.

Fast drug has one major disadvantage — the hibernating individual is locked into suspension for two months. At tech level 12, a fast drug antidote can be synthesized, allowing drugged individuals to be awakened early. Without such an antidote, however, any attempt to abort fast drug-induced hibernation is a difficult and hazardous process.

FREEZING

Early methods of freezing lack finesse. At tech level 9, freezing is especially dangerous, as the unconscious individual must be quick-frozen by immersing him in supercooled liquid. Slower freezing would allow the water in cell tissues to form into ice crystals, rupturing cell membranes.

At this stage, revival techniques are equally primitive. They largely depend on drugs given the subject before freezing. The drugs prepare the individual, once thawed, to revive on his own. At this primitive tech level, substantial risk is involved — death claims one person out of every six frozen.

The invention of the gravisonic modulator (for gravitic-sonic) at tech level 11 makes the safe freezing of living creatures practical. Just as visual holography uses multiple light sources to make three-dimensional images, sonic holography uses multiple ultrasonic projectors to obtain precise internal images of solid objects. The gravitic modulator operates on principles similar to inertial compensators, adding or subtracting motion to subatomic particles in order to rapidly and uniformly warm or cool objects. The sonic imager provides the modulator's computer with precise images of the subject, and allows the computer to direct the gravitic modulator with the instructions for the precise heating and cooling of areas as needed.

"The invention of the gravisonic modulator at tech level 11 makes the safe freezing of living creatures practical."

Thus by tech 11, individuals can be frozen or thawed with great speed and precision. Temperatures of regions deep within the body can be rapidly adjusted without affecting surrounding or intervening areas. The following procedure is used for cold berths.

The berth's computer first makes an interior map of the body, comparing it to expected anatomical patterns. This step is crucial for easy revival. Next, the freezing sequence begins. The computer directs electrical pulses to areas of the brain, rendering the subject unconscious and stimulating changes in body chemistry. It then carefully cools areas of the body, adjusting for the reactions of tissues and body fluids. Finally, according to a carefully planned pattern, the computer quick-freezes the body, starting with the vital organs.

The thawing process is largely the reverse of freezing. Referencing information recorded as the body was frozen, the computer uses the gravisonic system to warm areas in another precisely controlled pattern. More electrical pulses stimulate the heart, glands, and brain activity.

Although freezing is usually left as an automated process, a medically qualified individual monitors the revival, compensating for irregularities and responding to problems or emergencies.

LOW BERTHS

Imperial citizens usually think of low berths as containers for frozen passengers. In fact, the term has a broader meaning, even referring to bunks where slaves are held or packed migrants lay drugged. Interstellar societies at tech level 11 and below — the Sword Worlds of the Spinward Marches, for instance — generally use chill berths, capsules that actively induce hibernation.

Passengers scheduled to ride in chill berths are generally installed about the time they would normally sleep as part of their daily cycle. A ten-day trip in hibernation is effectively the same as four hours' sleep. Most transport ships, in these circumstances, bring their low passengers out of hibernation hours before disembarking, keeping them unconscious so they may finish their rest. Usually, they awaken feeling more refreshed than they would after normal sleep.

When passengers are in hibernation for more than 20 days, most programs bring them to a state of semi-consciousness so they will not feel groggy at the end of the trip. Only able to hear, the better cold berths play music, audio entertainment, or sleep-learning programs at the occupants' level of consciousness. Since brain waves are monitored, passengers can even learn to change audio channels or reply to yes-no questions put to them by the ship's medic or steward.

More common in the Shattered Imperium, however, is the cold berth. As brutal as low-tech cold berths might seem, freezing occupants with supercooled fluids, they were standard in the Third Imperium until the 300s. Their low cost and simplicity made them easy to manufacture.

Such berths found much use in that era, for the Long Night had left trillions in miserable conditions, and many of these were desperate enough to risk their lives for a chance at escape. Those unfortunates were quickly recruited by corporations in need of manpower and shipped off to out-of-the-way destinations.

A common custom of the day was the low lottery. Under the steward's direction, the ship's captain contributed Cr10 out of each low passage. Each low passenger guessed the number of low travellers who would survive the trip. If the winner himself died, the captain got the money. This practice provided some chance for the typically destitute low passengers to have some money upon their arrival.

Since those times, more advanced cold berths have come into use, and new designs have been invented. The emergency cold berth, double standard size, accommodates four occupants of adult size. At tech 15, it can freeze the occupants — fully-clothed and unprepared — within sixty seconds. To do this, it forgoes all preliminary steps, trading ease of entry for a lengthy and difficult revival.

The Navy has adapted emergency low berth procedures for its frozen watch program. In the heat of battle, vital personnel can easily be incapacitated. To this end, the Navy places additional crew members on its capital ships in suspended animation. These crew replacements are known as the frozen watch.

Frozen watch procedures reverse those for emergency berths. Crewmen are readied for freezing and installed with great care, a process taking about three hours at tech level 15. All potential problems are identified and corrected in advance. This allows the system to thaw occupants without the careful monitoring and adjusting that would otherwise go on. Generally, frozen watch personnel are awake and alert within five minutes after the cycle-out procedure is started.

Suspended animation techniques first saw use in medicine. The medical cold berth was designed for versatility to ease the handling of injured and helpless patients. Equipped with built-in diagnostic aids, it has facilities comparable to those of the standard computerized med scanner.

In most cases, the berth merely cools the patient, temporarily slowing body functions enough to assure survival until arrival at a hospital. But at tech level 11 and above, the berth can also freeze the patient if the situation so demands. For speed's sake, the med berth takes fewer precautions than its standard counterpart, but it carefully records the process to aid revival technicians later.

One important development has sprung from the use of suspended animation in medicine: portable berths. Medics found that transporting an injured person to a cold berth was

"At tech 15, the cold berth can freeze the occupants — fully-clothed and unprepared — within sixty seconds."

often difficult. The victim's injuries might be worsened by the movement.

Their solution was to separate the berth's support equipment from its heat exchanging system. The result was a stretcher-like carrier that plugged into a freezer frame. The stretcher, with its own monitors and power supply, keeps the patient alive. The frame handles freezing and revival.

With this system, a frame can be mounted in a hospital, or even an ambulance. An injured person can then be placed in the "stretcher" capsule, which will maintain his vital functions until the capsule can be placed in a frame and its occupant frozen. Ambulances can even freeze victims while en route to a hospital, alleviating the need for immediate treatment.

One other especially versatile system is the livestock cold berth. Such berths come in an array of sizes and shapes, each able to accommodate a wide range of lifeforms. Livestock berths are unique in being software, rather than hardware, dependent. Rather than build a unique berth for each species, livestock berths are designed to be adaptable. Without proper programming, however, they cannot recognize the metabolic nuances of the creatures contained within, and are limited to performing quick freezes and thaws.

Writing a program for a livestock berth (or any other, for that matter) requires a lot of time, along with much programming and biological knowledge. Fortunately, programs already exist for most species commonly transported in Imperial space via cold berths. For less common lifeforms, A and B class starports have specialists trained to preset berths as well as install and revive livestock.

LOW BERTHS AND SPACE TRANSPORTATION

Perhaps the chief reason for the low berth's popularity in the Imperium is its value in long distance transportation. Seeing the success of the portable medical berth, merchants adapted the idea to passenger service.

Many passenger ships, especially subsidized craft travelling along set routes, use portable berths. This allows low passengers to be handled in much the same way as freight.

A low passenger going from Dingir to Regina, for instance, is first frozen when she boards a ship at Dingir. Once en route, her capsule is transferred from ship to ship. At no time will she have to risk thawing except at Regina. The portable berth keeps her in suspended animation as she is passed between starships.

As with high and middle passages, the rate for low passage is controlled by the Imperial Ministry of Transportation. Interstellar transport companies chartered and licensed by the Imperium are required to provide low passage, charging a fixed rate of Cr1,000 for transport to the next scheduled port of call.

The annual number of low passages provided by the line, as well as the jump distances involved, are regulated by the company's charter. There must be enough jump-2 and jump-3 passages to make long distance travel practical.

Because the portable components of low berths are regularly exchanged, many ship owners purchase only mounting frames, not complete berths. They then buy into the pool of portable berths. The main pool is maintained by the Ministry of Transportation through the Starport Authority, although smaller transport lines sometimes maintain their own.

Most starports rated above class E have locations for the storage of portable low berths. At class D ports, this is typically just a cargo area equipped with power outlets, while at larger ports, complete berth terminals are available.

A and B class starports typically include facilities to install and cycle out passengers. A trained medic is always in attendance during cycle-out procedures. His services are provided free of charge by the port. Still, many responsible ships elect to use their own medics and onboard facilities.

SUSPENDED ANIMATION AND SOCIETY

Use of suspended animation is by no means restricted to space. In the medical field, freezing has proven its value in preserving patients until they can receive proper medical care.

Medical cold berths, standard on gravitic ambulances, have saved numerous lives. In hospitals, patients often wait frozen, their ailments arrested until such times as organs become available or needed offworld supplies arrive. In some cases, individuals frozen immediately after death can even be reanimated.

Many criminal justice systems make use of low berths. On some worlds, accused persons are kept in berths to await trial. A few freeze and store their convicts at arctic sites to cheaply remove them from society — albeit leaving their final disposition to future generations. Conversely, where statutes of limitation apply, criminals occasionally escape the law by hiding in cold berths until they can no longer be prosecuted.

A number of governments use freezing to alleviate unemployment problems. Rather than pay out welfare, it's often cheaper to freeze volunteers from among the poor during periods of economic recession and compensate them later. Corporations do something similar as an alternative to layoffs and reductions in force.

Professionals sometimes use low berths, as well. Athletes, for instance, may enter suspend animation between seasons to extend their playing lives. Similarly,

entertainers may preserve their skills and appearance by being frozen between jobs.

Well-to-do individuals — "timers" — with few personal attachments may enter a low berth for no more reason than to travel into the future. Instead of doing so alone, most elect to buy into a club for companionship and security. These timer clubs can be found on a number of high population worlds in both Imperial and Solomani space.

"Well-to-do individuals— 'timers' — with few personal attachments may enter a low berth for no more reason than to travel into the future."

The timers usually emerge at regular 10, 25, or 50-year intervals, although there are rare individuals who will take a longer view, emerging perhaps five times in a millennium. Synchronized this way, they have others with which to share their discoveries in new eras. They mingle with the "ephemerals," enjoying the fruit of their investments and their celebrity status as they tour. Then, after a time, they trickle back to their club facilities — usually situated in remote locations — and resume their sleep.

The Timer Club of Terra, founded in the same year as the Terran Confederation (–2398), is the oldest such club, serving as a model for others. Today, it boasts well over 10,000 members in cold sleep at four separate sites, including one on Luna. During the Long Night, though, membership dwindled to fewer than 100 members. A few of the current members of the Club claim to have been born as far back as the second century of the Third Imperium!

When the Club was formed in -2398, a handful of the charter members (born in the pre-starflight era on Terra) had already been hibernating off and on for more than 200 years. These famous individuals had been frozen around –2508 (2010 AD by the Terran calendar) for medical reasons, and they had been left in suspended animation for over a century. Once the technology necessary to cure their diseases became available, these individuals were finally revived. The last of these original founders of the Club finally died in -1996, well into the Rule of Man period.

SUSPENDED ANIMATION BEYOND THE IMPERIUM

Suspended animation techniques have also seen application outside Imperial space. The Solomani, for instance, have established a number of high-tech hospital stations, scattered roughly one per subsector throughout the Confederation. These stations depend on low berths to preserve the lives of patients during transport from homeworld to hospital.

The Zhodani use cold and chill berths to a lesser extent. Although such berths can be found on Consulate ships, more common are the so-called warm berths. A large minority of Zhodani are able to enter a state of suspended animation solely through psionics means. Warm berths merely provide privacy, basic life support, and a comfortable resting place. The Droyne also use the psionic method of suspension.

The Aslan, comparatively unskilled in the psionic arts, are rumored to have their own warm berth travel methods. Aslan spiritual adepts reputedly can enter trance-like states through rigorous self-discipline and meditation. Most Aslan use standard low berths, however.

Hiver in contrast, make almost no use of any suspended animation techniques. Most Hiver cannot withstand the drastic metabolic tampering that suspension demands. Hivers forced into cold or chill berths die at rates of five for every six frozen.

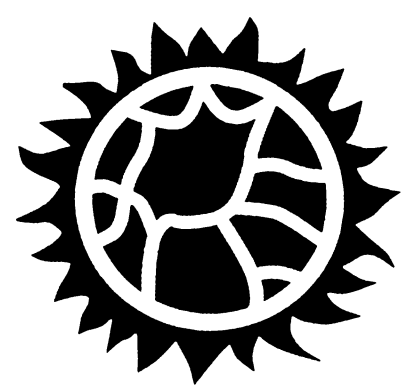
K'kree also rarely use low berths, but for a different reason than the Hivers. K'kree can easily endure the physical trauma of freezing or hibernation, but they are poorly equipped psychologically for long-term enclosure. Severely claustrophobic, few K'kree willingly enter a travel berth. Low berths are used within the Two Thousand Worlds, but only in special circumstances.

Apparently, the Ancients knew of another method of suspended animation: temporal stasis. This technique seems to have involved actual manipulation of the flow of time, slowing its effective rate of passage to a near standstill. Temporal stasis is far beyond the reach of any current technology.

RULES

The following page contains a step chart for handling low berth installation and revival procedures. Also included are additional rules on a variety of related subjects.

Also included is an equipment sheet for the portable medical cold berth common to ambulances and some military vehicles. •



LOW BERTH PROCEDURES

STANDARD PROCEDURES

The following procedures are suitable for use with standard commercial berths.

1 Installation

Install the passenger into low berth hibernation. Once successful with this task, proceed to step 2.

To safely install a passenger into low berth:

Routine, Medical, Edu, [time varies; see below] (unskilled OK, fateful)

Referee: Use the appropriate time increment from the table below.

System checks are suggested for this task, which is a cautious attempt. If a cautious attempt is made, this task is no longer fateful.

Mishaps may include damage the berth's systems, indicate serious delays in getting the passenger into low berth, or, in extreme cases, indicate the berth's occupant has been injured.

Installation Time Increments

Chill Berth, TL 9: 30 min
Chill Berth, TL 10: 10 min
Chill Berth, TL 11: 2 min
Chill Berth, TL 12+: 30 sec

Cold Berth, TL 9–10: 10 min
Cold Berth, TL 11–12: 20 min
Cold Berth, TL 13–14: 5 min
Cold Berth, TL 15: 1 min

Emergency Cold Berth: 6 sec
Medical Cold Berth: 30 sec
Frozen Watch: 30 min
Livestock Cold Berth: 1 min per 100kg of animal weight

2 Revival

Revive a passenger in low berth hibernation. On a mishap, proceed to step 3.

To revive a low berth passenger without incident:

Difficult, Medical, Edu, [time varies; see below] (unskilled OK, fateful)

Referee: The Medical skill and Edu are those of the medic attending at the time of revival.

Use the appropriate time increment from the table below.

This task is also hazardous if not performed in the field without proper facilities. If system checks are performed — that is, if a cautious task attempt is made — the task is no longer fateful.

Revival Time Increments

Chill Berth, TL 9: 30 min
Chill Berth, TL 10: 5 min
Chill Berth, TL 11+: 1 min

Cold Berth, TL 9–10: 1 hr
Cold Berth, TL 11–12: 30 min
Cold Berth, TL 13–14: 20 min
Cold Berth, TL 15: 10 min

Emergency Cold Berth: 1 hr
Medical Cold Berth: 30 min
Frozen Watch: 30 sec
Livestock Cold Berth: 10 min per 100kg of animal weight

3 Revival Mishaps

Revival task mishaps can result in a variety of problems for the berth's occupant. These problems can easily be dealt with using the Medical Digest article, "Diseases and Their Treatment," from *Travellers' Digest 20.*

Although such problems are not caused by germs, low passage ailments have similar effects, and they can easily be described using the same rules.

Common low passage maladies, the body systems they affect, and their usual severities are listed below. Other ailments, as well as milder or more severe versions of the sicknesses below, are also possible.

Cold Berth Sicknesses

- Loss of skin color, numbness: circulatory, mild.
- Recurring hiccups: muscular, mild.
- Dizziness: circulatory, mild.
- Heightened appetite: gastrointestinal, mild.
- Hangover symptoms: nervous, disabling.
- Drowsiness and slurred speech: nervous, disabling.
- Shakes: muscular, disabling.
- Stroke: nervous, catastrophic.
- Mental disorder: special. (See Medical Digest, *Travellers' Digest 17.)*

Chill Berth Sicknesses

- Cold symptoms: respiratory, mild.
- Loss of skin color, numbness: circulatory, mild.
- Soreness in joints: muscular, mild.
- Sensitivity to light: nervous, mild.
- Motor function problems: nervous, disabling.
- Weakness and lack of vigor: circulatory, disabling.
- Paralysis: nervous, catastrophic.
- Mental disorder: special. (See Medical Digest, *Travellers' Digest 17.)*

ADDITIONAL RULES

1 Prolonged Chill Berth Hibernation

A character takes a 1 point wound (randomly select which characteristic) for every continuous year he spends in a chill berth . However, when all characteristics have been reduced to less than 1, the character dies.

After revival, the character must spend 1D days of total inactivity for each year spent in hibernation, during which he heals the lost 1 characteristic point for that year (applied to the characteristic of the player's choice).

2 Prolonged Cold Berth Hibernation

A character takes a 1 point wound (randomly select which characteristic) for every continuous 25 years he spends in a chill berth. However, when all characteristics have been reduced to less than 1, the character dies.

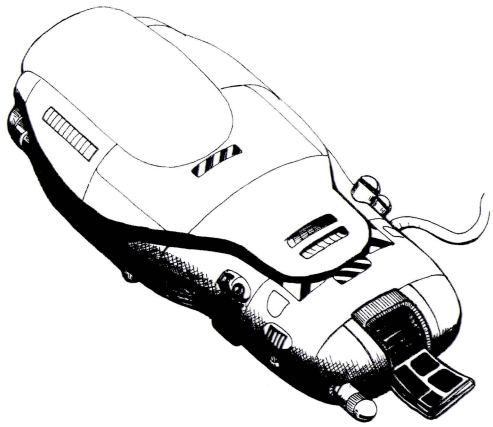
After revival, the character must spend 1D days of total inactivity for each 25 years spent in hibernation, during which he heals the lost 1 characteristic point for that 25-year period (applied to the characteristic of the player's choice).

3 Occurrence of Timer Clubs

Timer clubs, although quite rare, can be found on a number of high population worlds of tech 9 or better. To randomly determine if a given world has a timer club, throw 12+ on 2D, with a DM+1 if the world's tech level is 11+.

This makes timer clubs harder to find than Psionics Institutes. However, timer clubs are rarely hidden — they are legal on most worlds. Nevertheless, access to timer club facilities is tightly controlled, in order to protect the suspended members.

PORTABLE MEDICAL COLD BERTH



Tech level 15 version illustrated

EQUIPMENT STATISTICS

	TL	Type	Vol	Wt	Price
O	12	"Stretcher" Capsule-12	0.2 kl	100 kg	Cr25,000
O	12	Freezer Frame-12	13.3 kl	900 kg	Cr35,000
O	15	"Stretcher" Capsule-15	0.2 kl	50 kg	Cr25,000
O	15	Freezer Frame-15	13.3 kl	900 kg	Cr30,000

USAGE RECORD (OPTIONAL)

Each square represents one hour

O TL12: ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

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CUSTOMIZING NOTES:

DESCRIPTION

The portable medical cold berth, standard on ambulances and many military vehicles, comes in two parts: a "stretcher" capsule and a freezer frame.

The "stretcher" capsule encloses the patient, providing rudimentary life support and maintaining frozen patients in suspended animation. The capsule is also equipped with a built-in med scanner, equivalent to that described in DGP's *World Builder's Handbook* on page 23, and grav modules.

The "stretcher" capsule fits exactly into the freezer frame, an open framework which mounts the heavier gravisonic modulator machinery needed to freeze and thaw occupants.

Thus, if a patient must be frozen or revived, the "stretcher" capsule must be in place within the freezer frame. The capsule by itself can do no more than monitor the patient and keep him from an uncontrolled thaw.

TASK LIBRARY

To safely install a passenger into cold berth:
Routine, Medical, Edu, [time varies; see below] (unskilled OK, fateful)

Cold Berth, TL 9-10: 10 min	Cold Berth, TL 13-14: 5 min
Cold Berth, TL11-12: 20 min	Cold Berth, TL 15: 1 min

Referee: If system checks are made (cautious attempt), this task is no longer fateful. Mishaps include: damage the berth's systems, serious delays in getting the passenger into low berth, (or in extreme cases) the berth's occupant has been injured.

To revive a cold berth passenger without incident:
Difficult, Medical, Edu, [time varies; see below] (unskilled OK, fateful]

Cold Berth, TL 9-10: 1 hr	Cold Berth, TL 13–14: 20 min
Cold Berth, TL 11–12: 30 min	Cold Berth, TL 15: 10 min

Referee: If system checks are made (cautious attempt), this task is no longer fateful. This task is also hazardous if not performed in the field without proper facilities. Mishaps indicate the berth's occupant has been injured upon revival.

To repair a damaged portable medical cold berth:
[varies], Electronics or Computer, Edu, [varies]

Referee: Difficulty depends on the damage level: use the standard damage and repair guidelines. Time increments for shop repair are as follows:

superficial damage ..... 2 min	major damage ..... 4 hrs
minor damage ..... 10 min	destroyed..... 10 hrs

For field repair, double the time increment, in addition to other standard increases.

Grand Tour Retrospective Interview

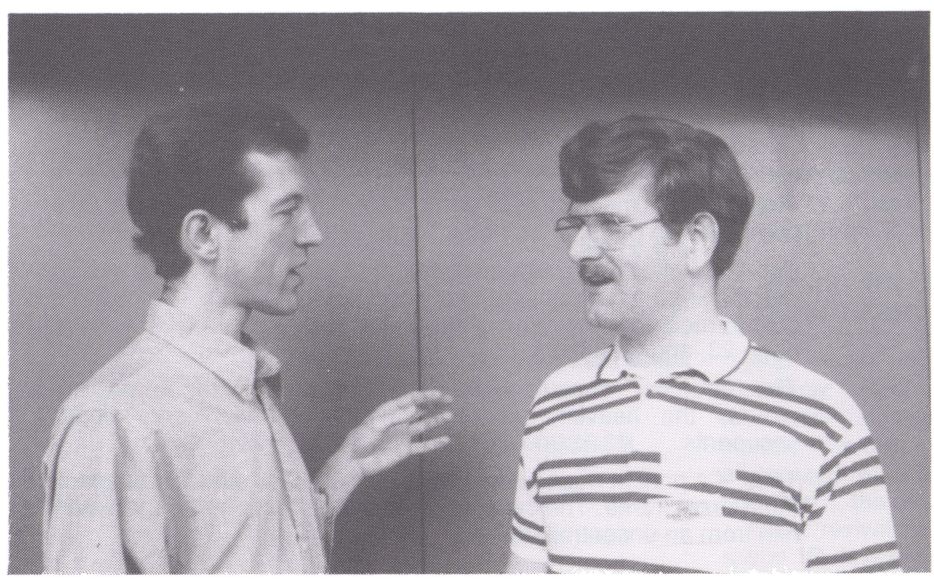
—by Rob Caswell

In early June, Rob Caswell sat down and talked to Joe Fugate Sr. and Gary Thomas about the Travellers' Digest's *Grand Tour feature adventures. With the planned itinerary almost at an end, Joe and Gary look back at the Imperium-spanning tour: how it started and where it's been.*

Rob Caswell: How much of the Grand Tour was planned from the start and how much developed on the fly?

Gary Thomas: Excellent question. Originally, the idea for doing *anything* was Joe's. He said, "Let's do this magazine", and I said, "Joe — you're nuts." He thought it was a good idea "since all the other Traveller support companies had discontinued their support or folded, so the market was ripe for a new one".

Anyway, he wanted to do one and I said, "OK, let's do one." But the way I play any role-playing game (and I was playing several at the time besides Traveller) is to insist on character development. To me that's the fun part. If I roll up a character, play him for an evening, and then never play him again I don't enjoy it as much as if I roll up a character and keep playing him.



So, I told Joe that we'd need a long-term campaign if we were going to do anything. I wanted an adventure that would really, really last. Joe's idea was, "OK, let's go through the whole Imperium and meet all the major races." We sort of bounced this back and forth and came up with things.

The original plan was we would start in the Spinward Marches with these four characters. We figured out who they would be. We wanted to hit all the homeworlds of the major races that were within Imperial Space. So we planned on stopping at Vland, we planned on stopping at Capital, we planned on stopping at Terra, and at Kusyu — and we would somehow squeeze in the Hivers and the K'kree.

That much was planned. With the stops in between, we figured there was a lot of space, we had five years to do it, and we would find stuff in between. But as for those big homeworlds, we planned to have them appear in the anniversary issues that would be released at the big game conventions.

Joe Fugate Sr.: Actually, the inspiration for the whole thing was the fact that the *Atlas of the Imperium* had been published. I got all excited when I got that product. I photocopied all the pages and began coloring in all the world hexes. I wanted to see what that map looked like. A couple of months later, I thought, wouldn't it be neat if we could actually *visit* all of this stuff. So that's what got me going on it.

RC: Do you feel that you've accomplished what you set out to do?

GT: We're delighted. We're ecstatic. But that's probably just a problem in medication... Seriously — I'm real happy. In Issue 1 we wrote our first Editors' Digest and we said, "Look, this is what we're going to do: visit all the major homeworlds, all the major races, we're going to have new technology, new rules, new excitement, and new character classes."

We've accomplished that! So, as far as what we've done in 21 issues: personally, I'm real satisfied and very, very happy.

There are one or two adventures that I wouldn't mind rewriting because they didn't shine as much as some of the others. Issues 9 and 13 really stand out in my mind as good issues. Pick some issue number "m" where "m" does not equal "n" times four plus one (where "n" is an integer), and you might find a dud. But on the whole, we did everything we set out to do. It's been great. And we know so much more than we ever knew before because of that.

The stuff at Capital — Marc Miller told us years ago, "Gee, I can't wait until you guys do Issue 9 because I want to know what Capital's like." And we got done with Issue 9 and now everybody knows and it's really super stuff! We went to Kusyu and found out, wow — the Aslan aren't really a "major" race! That's cool stuff! So, overall, I'm real happy with it — very much satisfied.

JF: Yeah, me too. I'm especially pleased with the way the characters have developed. Initially, when we were doing the characters, I said, "First of all I want a scientist in this, because nobody has ever really done a good campaign with a scientist." And then we said, "Well, Scouts are popular, so let's put a Scout in."

GT: Yeah, everyone loves Scouts so we had to put in a Scout.

JF: Then Gary said, "Y'know, there's one profession which really has a lot of adventure potential that hasn't had much done with it, and that's a reporter." So we said, "Let's put a reporter in." And then we had the robot rules, so we said, "We've got to put a robot in."

GT: Yeah, and that helped give us an excuse for putting in the scientist, too.

JF: Then we had to come up with a reason for making this trip. The journalist provided us with a reason to make the trip. We didn't call him a "journalist" in those days, he was just a "reporter".

GT: Yeah, before we really had it solidified for Issue 1 it was "some reporter guy". Then we realized that he couldn't just be some reporter because he couldn't advance, so we had the journalist character class which we published in Issue 2.

RC: How do you think the Grand Tour has changed how gamers perceive the background of Traveller's Imperium? Has it altered the way they look at the game?

GT: Well...yeah. A bunch. For one thing, we have now had the longest running **Traveller** adventure. There are some people out there who started subscribing with Issue 1 and they've been playing this campaign for five years! There used to be single, one-shot adventures. Then there were some trilogies. Then there was the *Traveller Adventure* that had lots of pages and, boy, you could play it for months. But here we've gone on for five years and I think that in itself has enriched **Traveller** since people have been forced to play in different cultures — on different worlds.

There are a lot of campaigns that concentrate on the Spinward Marches and that's very easy to do. It's very satisfying and can be done very well, but we made them go to Vland, to Capital, to Shudusham. We made them look at several minor races and encounter things that they may not have otherwise.

JF: Well, in a very real way, I think our Grand Tour trip also made the Rebellion much more meaningful. Before, all you had were the Spinward Marches, Solomani Rim, Reavers' Deep, and the Far Frontiers stuff, and that was it. Vland was just this big question mark.

GT: What we did by means of the Grand Tour was to put all the pieces together. There were the Spinward Marches, which have had a lot published about them. People vaguely knew what the worlds there were like. And then you had this amorphous vapor that was the rest of the Imperium.

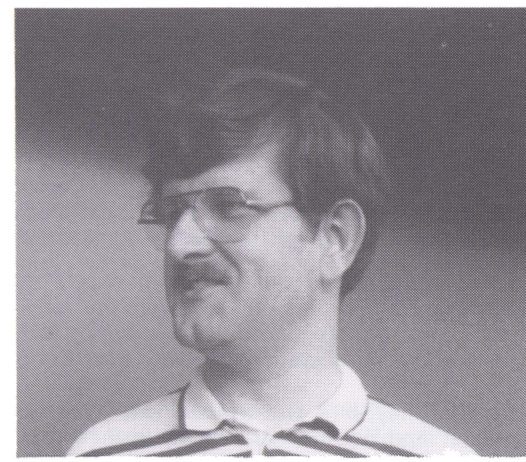
Sure, it was all printed, so a guy could sit down as Joe did and color all the worlds in with a blue pen and paste the maps together and, wow, there it was. But it was still this amorphous vapor that didn't have any shape. And oh yeah, here's Vland, and you can point to it. And oh yeah, here's Capital and here's Terra, but what was anything like? How were these people different?

It's like people who know nothing about China. They go to a Chinese restaurant and they look at the map printed on the menu. They see there's North China, there's South China, there's the Po river, here's the Mandarin area and here's — well, I don't know enough about Chinese food to make this a good analogy. But the idea is they don't know anything about it. It's just words and they don't mean anything. But then, when you order the food and you say, "Hey, I want this Szechuan style." And then the next time you go in you say, "I want this South China style." — assuming I know what I'm talking about here, and I don't — but the idea is that one time you're tasting something hot and it's got a certain mix of vegetables. The next time you're tasting something that has a different texture and a different color and flavor. Then you *know* it.

That's what we did. We took them to Vland and — well, here's "this mix of vegetables", I guess. The spices are slightly different. We tried to convey that when they were on Terra, it was a very different place than Vland. They weren't just interchangeable, cardboard cut-out worlds. It was a different milieu and characters had to act differently. We tried to do that — to make things more concrete and to show how different the flavors across the Imperium were.

As Joe says, that's one of the things that made the Rebellion possible. If you have an amorphous vapor, you can't split it up because it doesn't have pieces. What we did by stopping at different spots was create the pieces that could be allowed to break off and have their own flavor and outlook.

JF: Sure, and a lot of the discussion in the *Rebellion Sourcebook* talked about the Capital palace and the Moot and the AAB on Vland. None of that stuff existed in anybody's minds before we had our Grand Tour.



Well, partly, as you may have guessed, the Grand Tour was kind of a selfish thing because I wanted to know about these areas.

GT: When we stopped at Capital, we wrote up stuff on nobility. I think we've now written more on nobility in our publications than had ever appeared in **Traveller** publications before. Now there's a flavor between someone who's a sector duke and a subsector duke — or some knight and some guy who's the president of a planet.

RC: What did YOU learn about the Imperium that you didn't know before hand?

JF: Well, partly, as you may have guessed, the Grand Tour was kind of a selfish thing because I wanted to know about these areas. It was even interesting, in the first couple of issues, to find out about Deneb Sector. Although it wasn't one of our highest rated issues, I really enjoyed Wal-ta-ka from the adventure in Issue 2.

GT: Joe's absolutely right: it was totally selfish. I already mentioned that Marc Miller said, "I can't wait till you get to Issue 9 because I want to know what Capital's like and I want to know what the emperor's like and his personality."

And that was our motivation the whole way through: thirteen years ago, Marc Miller came up with this incredible game and it's really a clever system and it really fits together well. I think we improved it with what we did with **MegaTraveller** — Joe's rules add-ons and the background stuff we both did. But to start with, it was a great system and we just wanted a little more flesh on the bones. Here was this neat skeleton and we were curious as to what some of the muscles and nerves looked like.

When Joe mentioned the idea for the Grand Tour, I thought, wow, this is cool because I'd like to see all these alien races up close. So it was a very selfish thing. And we learned as much as anyone else.

When we started we knew that Issue 5 was going to be Vland, but we had no idea what Vland was going to be like. And 9 and 13 — we had these issue numbers in our head with little words by them, but we didn't know what they were going to be like.

There were a few things that we started off with in the planning stage that, halfway through the tour, we were going to pull as a surprise. Things that we had saved up. The Aslan thing we knew a couple of years before we did it. But in general, a lot of things were surprises to us and it was very pleasurable to find out those things.

One of the things I learned was that the palace was this floating structure — I think that was Joe's idea. It was real clever. That's one of the things I learned.

JF: There was one thing that surfaced when we put together *Book 8: Robots.* In there we came up with the idea of the Shudusham Concords. We picked Shudusham by looking at the map and choosing a system that was near the Sylean homeworld.

Then we said, hey, let's *visit* Shudusham. Krenstein is a robotics expert and has a high interest in the field. Obviously, since he has Aybee, he would have just a great time at Shudusham. We can put in some of the aliens we've been promising, too. We can put in some K'kree and Hivers.

That ended up being a really fun twist because it's a world that doesn't really want a lot of off-worlders, yet it sponsors this interstellar robotics conference kind of out of pride for its place in history.

RC: Which of the chapters of the Grand Tour was your favorite and why?

GT: I think...I almost said, "I think we would both agree", but I don't know, I'd have to ask Joe first. But my first reaction when you ask that is Issue 3.

JF: Agreed.

GT: That's the Ancients' site — a classical "dungeon crawl". Here's the map and here's the room and they've got numbers that you look up on the key and people wander around and do something. But it was fun!

The role-playing was a blast when we playtested the thing. It had 12 or 15 Vargr characters and here, for the first time, I think — maybe I'm bragging — but here, for the first time in the history of **Traveller**, were a dozen Vargr characters who were all very different in personality! It wasn't just, oh, here are 12 Vargr — they were 12 *individual* Vargr. When you encountered Aensorr, he was different from all the others. They had real, different personalities.

But I just think Ancients' sites are a blast and that's why I picked Issue 3.

JF: I think a more interesting question is which is our second favorite, since I could have told you Issue 3 was first choice for both of us. We did that as a team effort, too, so maybe that has something to do with it.

RC: OK, so what's choice number two?

GT: Well...Issue 1 was very good considering we didn't have any idea what we were doing. There was a lot in it which was fun. Issue 5 was interesting because of the way we tied so much together. There was the whole thing with Zid Rachele, which was neat since we'd just thrown that in the library data in Issue 1.

JF: He nuked a starport and killed a bunch of people because he was a Vilani supremacist. It's a contradiction in terms, since Vilani, typically, aren't racist.

GT: Anyway, Issue 5 was cool cause it had a whole lot of background on Vland. It had a new language. It had this

...we have now had the longest running Traveller adventure. There are some people out there who started subscribing with Issue 1 and they've been playing this campaign for five years!

Zid Rachele guy who I thought was interesting enough to use again in Issue 7. Issue 5 had a lot of neat things in it. I thought the plot twist was really clever. I like doing those, where (A) there's a mystery, and (A-prime) they solve the mystery, but in fact the mystery wasn't (A), it was (B) and the real solution was (B-prime). I like those kinds of mysteries. The same thing happened in Issue 13, which is another of my favorites.

JF: It's hard to really pick a number two. One of my favorites is Issue 8 at Shudusham, where Aybee gets shot by the Hiver Bruiser. And as I said before, I liked Wal-ta-ka in Issue 2 because I like alien worlds that have a lot of depth and detail to them. Unfortunately it was a rather passive adventure.

GT: There wasn't a lot to do. Here's this map that you need to get across — you use random rolls. You get lost, now you're in a desert — can you find water?

Another one that I really like, even though the ending is a little lame, is Issue 4. Here we have six characters all thrown

together, under amazing sorts of coincidences, and everyone had a motive to kill this woman. She's dead and who did it? It's a "locked-door" mystery. Here she is dead and Aybee must have done it. But everyone knows he couldn't have, so how was it done?

Part of the thing I liked about it, too, was its open-endedness. Any solution was a valid solution. If the PCs found out the real truth: oh, they were twins (which I've since learned is a cop-out in detective literature), that's great. But any solution that pins the crime on someone other than Aybee is an adequate solution, in the sense that, well, the characters get away.

And also that was a fun one because that was our first adventure taking place entirely on a starship. So there was a lot of background detail that ended up getting incorporated into later products. Like jump-dimming. It started there. Now why do the Vilani do this jump dimming? Well, because I wanted a way to turn off the lights so the murderer would have a way to kill this woman! So I had to think up some reasonable sounding explanation.

JF: Contrary to the mixed press that Issue 17 received, I really liked the Aslan adventure, too. I think from Issues 14 on, 17 is my favorite.

GT: If you want to talk issues as a whole, I think you'd get a different answer. Looking at issues as a whole, I'd have to say Issue 9, the visit to Capital. It just had so much neat stuff in it.

JF: Yeah, I'd agree with that.

RC: The exploits of the four characters have been a part of Traveller players' lives for five years. What happens to them now? Are we ever going to see their further adventures?

JF: No, I wouldn't say they're being *completely* retired, but we won't see them as "the four characters". We do have one follow-on adventure circa 1120 that we wrote as an RPGA tournament adventure for last years' GenCon, entitled "To Kill an Archduke". Akidda is now assistant director to S.M.A.R.T. He comes to an orbital station over Rhylanor when Krenstein and Aybee come to visit. It turns out they get involved in a plot to foil an assassination attempt on Archduke Norris.

We also killed off Dur before that occurred, so Dur isn't there.

GT: Yeah, according to that adventure, Dur is dead and the original Aybee is wandering space — looking for a can of oil, or something. On one hand, Sherlock Holmes was killed off by Arthur Conan Doyle. Moriarty and he were at the falls and he plunged over the edge. Watson wrote it up and said, "Gosh, it's too bad he's dead." A few years later, as a result of fan mail, well, he wasn't really dead! He'd done the whole thing to fool Moriarty's gang so he could round them all up. So Holmes is still alive and well.

The same thing has happened with I don't know how many fictional characters. So if we get enough letters that say, "Well gosh, we really want to see another adventure with these guys", *MegaTraveller Journal* has no policy against doing adventures with these four characters.

For that matter, what did they do between Shudusham and Terra? We can still write that adventure. They had months of travel time, right there. They could have stopped on lots of different worlds.

JF: Well, one thing we never mentioned is that Krenstein has a daughter near Massilia or Diaspora.

RC: Gary, you said there's a good story behind how you came up with the names for the characters.

GT: Well, I named most of them — except Akidda Laagiir. I think Joe just picked that one off a list of random Vilani words, but I'm the one who started calling him "Kidd". I think Joe named Krenstein — did you name him?

JF: I came up with the first name, you came up with the last name.

GT: Yeah, I came up with "Krenstein" and it wasn't until much later that I realized something. It's sort of embarrassing I didn't notice this from the start. Someone at a convention pointed it out to me, he said, "It's real cool how the guy who made the robot has a name kinda like "Frankenstein"." I said, "Oh, yeah. You're right!" I just picked Krenstein because it sounded like a scientific name.

One of the names I'm most proud of is AB-101 (Aybee). When Joe and I met we were working for a computer consulting firm and there was this huge, 6,000-line program called "Advanced Banking Program 101". It was in COBOL and it was horrible to maintain, and Joe was responsible for it. He complained about it all the time.

So when we started to do this magazine, I came into Joe's office and said, "Hey, I've got a name for this robot". He says, "What?", and I said "AB-101". He said, "Are you kidding?". I said, "Yeah, er, no, I'm not kidding. It's 'Aybee Wan Owen'."

The other name I'm particularly proud of is "Dur Telemon". "Dur" is from the Latin word meaning "tough" or "hard". And that was the way I pictured Dur: he was the tough guy. He was the one who'd always turn his hand into a fist and take the first punch.

Then "Telemon" is the father of Ajax. They're heroes out of the Iliad. I chose it because I always liked the sound of that name. As a matter of fact, I was reading something last week and realized I misspelled it. It should have an "a" in the second syllable.

RC: If you had to write the Grand Tour again, what would you do differently? Would you do it at all?

GT: Yes, we'd definitely do it again. There were one or two adventures that were weaker than the others.

When we first started off, our issues were very much theme oriented. We had a robot, so we had an article on building robots. It had an orbital complex, so the Tech Briefs article was on orbital complexes. And the Library Data was intimately related to the adventure.

Issue 2 had very much the same approach. Both 5 and 9 were that way. I think our best issues were the ones that were theme oriented. There were a few where we lost our focus — some of the more recent issues, too. Just a real potpourri, shotgun approach to selecting articles.

Don't get me wrong, they were all good articles, but it wasn't like Issue 9 with the Capital where everything tied together in a beautiful package.

JF: And that's what we plan on doing more of again, starting in the *MegaTraveller Journal*. •

Meet the Staff of Digest Group Publications

—by the Staff

Joe D. Fugate Sr., merchant

8A7CB7 age 35 6 terms Cr8,000
Artisan-3, Computer-3, History-2, Instruction-2, Jack-of-all-Trades-2, Leader-3, Electronics-1, Physics-1

Joe D. Fugate Sr, the owner at Digest Group Publications, is not a Deneb native, but is originally from a rural location on Kinorb in the Spinward Marches.

Joe has spent the last five years wringing his hands, nervously awaiting each of Akidda Laagiir's article installments to fill the slot in the *Digest.* Joe's other notable trait is that he makes sure DGP is single-handedly responsible for maintaining the pizza industry on Deneb.

Gary Thomas, scientist

8B7EC8 age 33 6 terms Cr2,000
Computer-3, History-3, Instruction-3, Linguistics-3, Persuasion-3, Artisan-2, Jack-of-all-trades-2, Leader-2, Liaison-2, Communications-1, Interview-1, Steward-1, Blowgun-0, Electronics-0, Handgun-0, Propeller-driven Aircraft-0, Submachinegun-0, Wheeled Vehicle-0

Gary Thomas, an editor at the Terran offices of Digest Group Publications, is an autodidact who enjoys nothing so much as sitting at home in an easy chair reading some arcane book in some dead Terran language. When he's not working or reading, he can typically be found playing the piano, or pulling weeds in his garden under the careful supervision of his cat, Shanta. (Shanta, by the way, seemingly nothing more than a domestic shorthair, is actually a member of a psionic minor race that has infiltrated homes of several DGP staff members.)

Rob Caswell, scientist

8B8CA7 age 30 3 terms Cr(see table of contents reference)
Artisan-4, Jack-of-all-Trades-3, Admin-2, Naval Architect-2, Wheeled Vehicle-2, Astrophysics-1, Carousing-1, Forgery-1, Geology-1, History-1, Instruction-1, Linguistics-1, Persuasion-1, Streetwise-1, Biology-0, Computer-0, Handgun-0, Liason-0, Rifleman-0, Small Water Craft-0, Steward-0, Survival-0

Born in 1090 on neighboring Amshal, Rob moved to Deneb in 1110 to pursue his education at the Greater Deneb University (GDU). There he worked towards his astrophysics degree and more importantly, as he is fond of relating, learned to *think.* It was during his stay at GDU when he became familiar with *The Travellers' Digest.* After graduation, Rob engaged in a number of careers, from commercial interior design to advertising design - none of them relating to his degree.

He has been with *The Travellers' Digest* for the past four years and currently holds the position of Art Director/ Associate Editor. In addition to his *Digest* work, Rob has done extensive freelance illustration and writing with such firms as Shugilii-Chadwick, LIC and the Freedonian Air & Space Administration, to mention a few.

He currently lives in a suburb of Deneb's capital city of Sydkai, with his wife (Deb Zeigler) and two pet harpos living in the garden. He enjoys hiking, plastic modeling, consumer aerospace activities, and reading. He *doesn't* enjoy receiving his monthly telecommunications bill.

Deb Zeigler, scientist

8B6FC9 age 28
2.5 terms
Cr25,000
Computer-3, Electronics-3, Jack-of-all-Trades-3, Astronomy-2, Instruction-2, Mechanical-2, Physics-2, Admin-1, Artisan-1, Biology-1, Bow-1, Foil-1, Equestrian-1, History-1, Small Water Craft-1, Wheeled Vehicle-1, Linguistics-0, Rifle-0, Streetwise-0, Steward-0

Born on Mora in 1092, Deb spent her whole life on that world until she graduated from college. In 1110, she was accepted at the Matriarch's Honor College, a member of the prestigious Pleiades League of womens' colleges on Mora. There she worked towards her degree in astronomy and physics. After receiving her degree with honors, Deb moved to Deneb in 1114 to continue her education at the Greater Deneb University. In 1116, when the news of the Emperor's assassination prompted the departure of her faculty sponsor (a Vargr on a visiting professorship), Deb found herself without a thesis advisor and was forced to depart GDU without a graduate degree. However, she did manage to leave GDU with a fiance — Rob Caswell, a fellow student who had just recently joined the staff at *The Travellers' Digest* as an illustrator. After leaving graduate school, Deb found a position as an electronics technician with a small firm in Sydkai.

Deb has been with *The Travellers' Digest* for the past couple years, first as a part-time consultant, and more recently, as Technical Editor. Before joining the staff at *The Travellers' Digest,* Deb did some freelance writing for Shugilii-Chadwick, LIC.

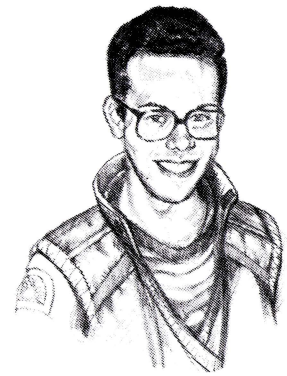
Having married last year, she now lives in a suburb of Sydkai with her husband and the two pet harpos who reside in the garden.

Lester Smith, Schizophrenic

739EC0 age 34 4 terms
Cr100,000
Streetwise-4, Steward-4, Interview-4, Assault Rifle-3, Linguistic-3, Persuasion-3, Survival-3, Blowgun-2, Chemistry-2, History-2, Instruction-2, Medical-2, Brawling-1, Foil-1, Computer-1, Stealth-1,

Firmly convinced he is living in an alternate universe, Smith has picked up a wide variety of talents, few of them useful. He bears the distinction of having been hospitalized in over a hundred different systems for obvious disconnectedness with reality. When last heard about, he was posing as a professer of literature. Present where-abouts unknown.

James Holden, Rogue



694CB8 age 19 2 terms
Cr0
Liaison-2, Artisan-1, Computer-1, Jack-of-all-Trades-1, Medical-1, Wheeled Vehicle-0

James Holden left his homeworld, Clarissa (Deneb 1217 C536422-A), at age 15. A compulsive traveller — and, some say, con artist — he journeyed throughout the Domain of Deneb and the alien realms beyond.

Despite the skeptics who label his accounts apocryphal, Holden has found a niche — albeit a self-made one — as the Digest's alien affairs expert. Recently, his attention has turned to the more arcane fields of geneering and robotics.

Holden's current assignment has taken him to the Aslan Colonies. His precise whereabouts are unknown, but some find tales of real estate swindles in the Riftspan Reaches significant...

Nancy Parker, Journalist

695CA5 age 35 6 terms
Cr0
Instruction-3, Linguistics-2, Music-2, Steward-2, Artisan-1, Equestrian-1, History-1, Jack-of-all-Trades-1, Mechanical-1, Medical-1, Persuasion-1, Science-1, Survival-1, Wheeled Vehicle-1, Blade-0, Bow-0, Computer-0, Handgun-0

Born on Fornice (Spinward Marches 3025) in 1085, Ms. Parker traveled extensively in the Mora subsector before coming to Deneb in 1110. She met and married her husband while attending the university on Mora, and both were more than happy to flee the restrictive atmosphere there. Her degree is in music and education, but she loves to continue her education in any manner possible, in any field. She has engaged in numerous professions but enjoys teaching most of all.

Ms. Parker has been with the Digest for five years and currently holds the position of contributing editor, but does anything else that seems to need doing around the office as well.

The Parkers live not far from the Digest offices, in a suburb where they can have a huge garden and a variable number of pets to amuse their two daughters.

Robert Parker, ex-Scout

7B4CC5 age 35 6 terms Cr0

Jack-of-all-Trades-4, Linguistics-4, Music-3, Artisan-2, Brawling-2, Medical-2, Rifleman-2, Streetwise-2, Wheeled Vehicle-2, Aircraft-1, Blade-1, Bow-1, Broadsword-1, Communications-1, Computer-1, Electronics-1, Equestrian-1, Geology-1, History-1, Instruction-1, Mechanical-1, Navigation-1, Physics-1, Pistol-1, Sling-1, Small Watercraft-1, Stealth-1, Survey-1, Survival-1, Zero-G Environ-1

Robert Parker was born on Glisten and has been travelling ever since, both in the company of his parents and as an adult. His varied career has led to the development of many strange and esoteric skills. While in the Trojan Reach as a young man, he was involved in a clan war as a mercenary, where he learned his various weapon skills. A term in the Scouts was spent on geological surveys of backwater planets, seeking resources for their development. One of his noteworthy discoveries was a previously unsuspected area of tectonic divergence on Frond. He studied in the University of Mora, where he met and married his wife, Nancy. They had travelled considerably before coming to Deneb and joining the Digest staff. Robert leaves the Digest with this issue to pursue other interests, which include music composition and custom jewelry crafting.

Patricia Fugate, merchant

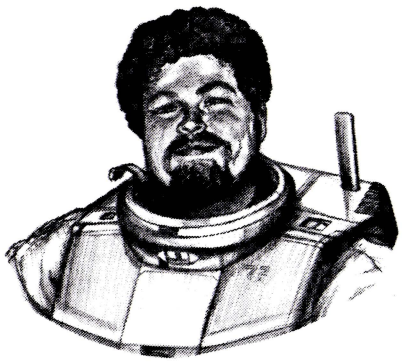
574987 age 33 4 terms Cr I-wish-I-had-some

Equestrian-2, Steward-2, Artisan-1, Broker-1, Carousing-1, Computer-1, Instruction-1, Jack-of-all-Trades-2, Linguistics-1, Wheeled Vehicle-1, Forgery-0, Persuasion-0, Sling-0, Survival-0

Joe D. Fugate Sr. found this young tender-foot 15 years ago, in the back woods of Terra. They married and moved to Deneb where they had two children.

Patricia Fugate is now employed with Digest Group Publications as the "Responsible Party" (if there's something that needs to be done, she's responsible). This position has led to the development of many skills that she did not know she possessed, and many that she wished no one had found out about. On a typical tour of the facilities, a person might find her at a console, at a warehouse, or back at the drawing board.

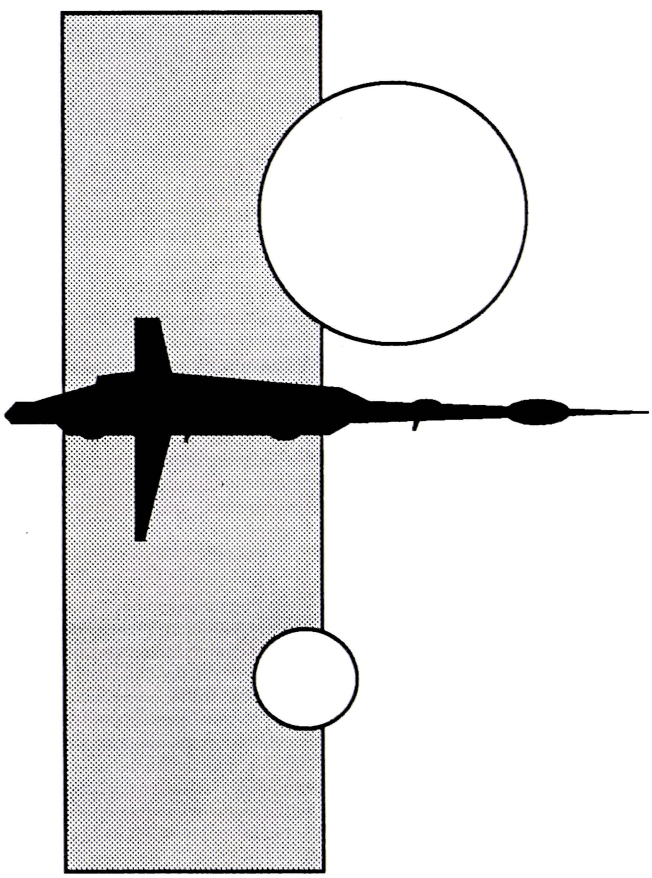
Tom Peters, Journalist



8A6675 age 33 4 terms Cr0

Artisan-3, Bureaucracy-2, Astronomy-1, Fixed-winged Aircraft-1, Ground Vehicle-0, Handgun-1, History-1, Instruction-1, Jack-of-all-Trades-1, Large Blade-1, Navigation-1, Persuasion-1, Unarmed Combat-1, Vac Suit-1, Science-1, Computer-0, Electronics-0, Equestrian-0, Mechanical-0, Small Watercraft-0, Survival-0

Tom Peters arrived at Deneb in 1108 while attempting to evade the war-fever that was consuming the rest of the Marches at that time (i.e., avoided the "draft"). He took on a variety of jobs ranging from journalist to mechanic for ground cars. Finally ending up in a freelance position with Digest Group. After living for a while in the Caswells' garden with the harpos, Peters has now secured for himself a small but homey place where he lives with his pet dolphin, Arthur. •



Survey Sweepstakes

TRAVELLERS' DIGEST 21

Let us know what you think! Photocopy the survey below, fill it out for the articles you read, and send it to: TD21 Survey Sweepstakes, 8979 Mandan Ct., Boise, ID 83709. Three names will be chosen at random to receive Flaming Eye — Campaign Sourcebook. Deadline for entries is December 15, 1990.

	Didn't Read	Not Useful	Somewhat Useful	Very Useful
Editor's Digest	☐	☐	☐	☐
Feature Adventure: One Last Stop	☐	☐	☐	☐
Mega Adventure Pirates of Tetrini	☐	☐	☐	☐
Traveller Q&A	☐	☐	☐	☐
The Rebel Reporter: The Face Behind the Claw	☐	☐	☐	☐
Cache and Carry	☐	☐	☐	☐
Medical Digest: Suspended Anim.	☐	☐	☐	☐
2300AD: Two Mini-adv.	☐	☐	☐	☐

Grand Tour Interview:
☐ Enjoyed ☐ Didn't Enjoy

Meet the Staff of DGP:
☐ Enjoyed ☐ Didn't Enjoy

1. Quality of Cover Art:
☐ Excellent ☐ Good ☐ So-so

2. Quality of Interior Art:
☐ Excellent ☐ Good ☐ So-so

Name and Address:

FOR OUR INFORMATION

NOTE: Please use back of page for the answers.

1. If you have an on-going MegaTraveller campign in the Shattered Imperium, in what region is it set?

2. What material would you like most to see us publish for that region?

3. What is the typical duration of one of your role-playing sessions (in hours)?

4. Looking back at the twenty-one issue run of the *Digest*, which of the Grand Tour feature adventures was your favorite (name and/or issue number). What did you like about it?

5. Besides MegaTraveller, what other RPGs to you play with any regularity?

6. Besides gaming, what would you rate as your top three hobbies or interests?

7. When taking this and past surveys, has your measure of how "useful" an article has been related directly to how "enjoyable" the article has been (see this issue's *Meet The DGP Staff* for a useless, but hopefully enjoyable example)?

8. Should we publish material that is simply enjoyable and adds to the game's flavor, or should everything have a direct and obvious role-playing usage (a good example here is MegaTraveller fiction)?

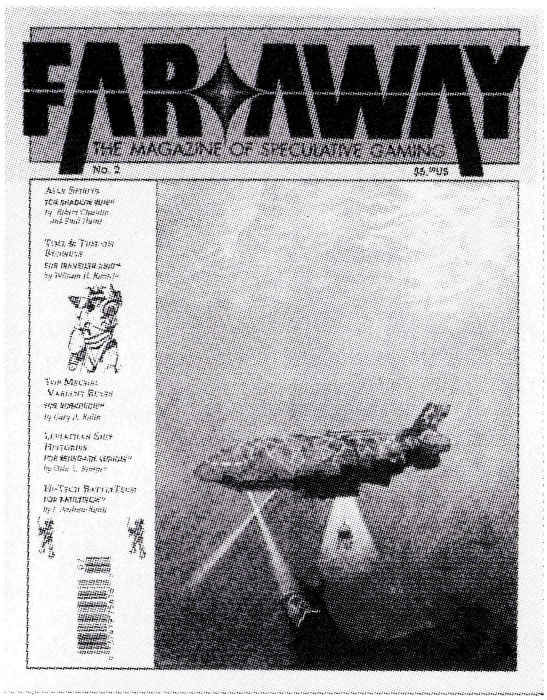
9. What are your three favorite science fiction films of all time?

10. Now's your chance to resolve the on-going DGP staff debate. Who's the better Saavik, Robin Curtiss or Kirstie Alley?

Comments:

Have you ever wanted to go

Far & Away...??



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Two 2300AD Mini-adventures

"The Gaussing Game"—by Rob Caswell

This adventure is for characters serving as crew aboard a starship plying the spacelanes of the American arm. Having the characters holding high level positions (i.e. Captain, navigator, pilot, or communications officer) will enhance the challenges present in the adventure.

While travelling the American Sub-Arm, the PC's ship must stop at the Vega system to discharge their drives before continuing. They may be travelling in either direction along the Sub-Arm; their direction will not affect the play of the adventure.

Shortly after the PC's arrival in-system, they receive a distress call from the nearby Vega Far Station 5 (see sidebar). They are reporting a dangerous biological contamination on board the station and request assistance. Interstellar transport law dictates that all ships must supply whatever aid is needed in such an emergency, so long as it does not threaten the immediate safety of the responding vessel.

The station can be contacted by radio for further details on their crisis. They report that some manner of alien microorganism seems to have been carried in on the latest exploration ship returning from the Beta Aquilae cluster. Somehow it got through their decontamination process and is now spreading throughout the station. Though not apparently posing a direct threat to organic material (i.e. humans), the organism is attacking various forms of polymer aboard Far Station 5 causing deterioration. So far its activity has rendered all space suits unusable and is slowly destroying the station's environmental seals.

The rate of seal decay seems linear, so the station personnel have estimated the time till they lose environmental integrity to be about 30 hours.

With this in mind, they ask that your first priority be to intercept Rimrider, an independent cargo ship which left the station only a few hours before. Bound for Ellis, this ship is likely to be carrying the biological and could seriously spread the infection if not stopped. The station's radio can not contact Rimrider, as it's already travelling faster than the radio wavefront. Currently, the PC's ship is the only (non-infected) vessel in-system and must undertake the duty of turning back the potential "plague ship".

Catching up to Rimrider should be fairly easy. It is an old Anjou-class freighter with an even older drive, operating at a fairly low warp efficiency. However, it must be taken into consideration that the PC's ship was not able to completely discharge their drives before engaging in the pursuit. This imposes a limit on just how far the players can chase Rimrider. The Director is encouraged to play up this restriction as an added element of tension.

When the PC's finally catch up to Rimrider, they must hail it and make contact. Once the two ship's drives have been turned off, meaningful communication can commence.

Upon hearing of the situation, Rimrider's captain, Shayleen Weaver, will become cold and defensive. She states that they need more proof that the emergency exists than the PC's word, as she is carrying perishable cargo and is running on a very tight schedule. She can be sufficiently convinced of the crisis if the PC's upload the distress call from their ship's recorder to Rimrider. None the less, she will remain in a difficult mood until she is reassured that she will be reimbursed for the profit loss caused by this delay.

If Rimrider's crew performs an inspection of their own environmental seals, they will find minor indications of decay, but the process appears to have stopped.

Once the PC's arrive back to Far Station 5, they find that it's seals are still holding, though the voice of the station's chief has taken on a more worried tone. There have still been no biological side effects, but the seals are continuing their decay.

There is no way to evacuate the station's crew without risking contamination of a non-infected ship. It is not possible to be 100% certain that Rimrider is "bug-free", as it doesn't have the necessary scientific equipment aboard. The only course of action is to analyze the problem.

The following details should be considered when trying to discover the nature of the microorganism:

1. Rimrider seems to have had an infestation that either died or went dormant.
2. The ISV-5 *Titus*, the ship which is suspected of carrying the biological, is still docked at Far Station 5. The crew reported no signs of polymer deterioration till several hours after the ship had moored at the station.

This should lead characters to suspect that something in an active starship's environment hampers the activity of the lifeform. If the players are having a difficult time pitting the facts together, feel free to use the station's chief to guide their thoughts. He's certainly enthusiastic about finding a solution!

Once the characters narrow the scope of their search for answers, they can work with the stations lab personnel to refine the answer. The solution seems to lie in the magnetic field generated by a ship's MHD turbines. The presence of a significant magnetic field seems to inhibit the microorganism's interaction with polymers. Results seem to indicate that if sufficient time passes while the organisms are in a strong enough magnetic field and not able to interact with polymers, they will die

"Vega Far Station 5"
The American Space Force base at Vega Far Station 5 serves as a coordination center for exploration activities in the Beta Aquilae cluster: a group of stars lying on the other side of the Acey-Acey bridge. The station is built on a large asteroid orbitting with a 40 degree inclination to Vega's massive proto-planetary disk. Upon returning from the Beta Aquilae cluster, starship crews use the station as a containment and quarantine facility for themselves and any return sample materials.

off. The main variable controlling the length of time it takes to eradicate the lifeform is the magnetic field's strength.

With the infestation's nature finally understood, the most logical course of action is to evacuate the station's crew to Rimrider, the PC's vessel, and *Titus* (the number of station personnel is too great for any single vessel to accommodate). It will be difficult to get Captain Weaver to agree to this, but she will soften considerably when the station's chief informs her that the ASF will compensate all involved for any profit losses incurred during the rescue operation.

At this point, it is wisest to get to the nearest civilized system, Hermes being the closest. Under it's own field, the PC's ship should be able to cleanse itself of the infection after a 3 week quarantine, though outside support will be necessary to support the increase in passengers due to the station's "refugees". •

"Homecoming"—by Tom Peters

This Adventure involves the lone outpost orbiting one of the worlds of the Beta Aquilae exploration area off the American Arm. The characters are manning a Campbell Station (see sidebar), directing the unmanned exploration effort on the planet below. A starship has dropped them here and gone on to make the rounds to several other sites.

The Pioneer Society is conducting the whole operation on a shoe-string budget, using surplus equipment purchased from the AAEC. The Society hopes for a spectacular success on one of their worlds and to garner an outpouring of public support (and donations) in order to continue operating.

The PCs have been on station for approximately six months, servicing the free-flying science platforms with their single orbital transfer vehicle (OTV),collecting data, and conducting surface experiments with the small army of remotely piloted vehicles (RPVs) and robots that have been dropped to the yet unnamed planet they circle.

The characters are due to be rotated from this duty in six more weeks, and most of the major goals of the assignment have been completed. All that remains is the launch of the sample return rocket from the surface, and recovery of its cargo with the OTV. This is due to occur just before departure, to minimize possible exposure to alien organisms in the soil and flora samples.

In the last weeks,efforts have been concentrated on getting the most promising samples to qualify the planet for manned ground analysis. Almost as much effort is being expended on the All-Station Ultimate Canasta Tournament. Campbell Stations can get a little boring...

The adventure gets started with an unexpected disturbance on the telemetry channels that link the station and the RPVs planetside. Various bizarre incidents occur to the drones and robots. Rovers try to climb vertical cliffs and cross chasms. Some of the airborne vehicles seem to be intent on divebombing their ground-bound cousins. These events get gradually more and more serious, and lapses in control become longer.

If the initial attempts at determining the nature of the "interference" are unsuccessful, all control of the ground-based equipment should be lost for most of an orbit. There remains a ten minute period of every orbit during which control can be reestablished.

A few orbits after the problem arises, an incoming voice message indicates that the equipment has been taken over by an alien intelligence in orbit. Conversation will eventually reveal the orbital period of the "alien" spacecraft.

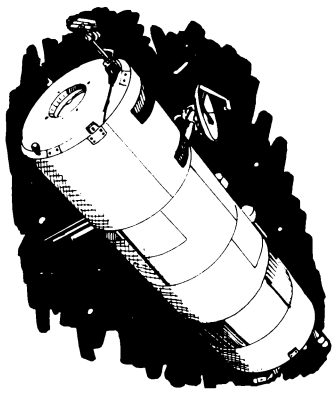
The source of interference is apparently a large spacecraft that has taken up a polar orbit, several hundred miles above the Station's orbit. Visual inspection with the telescopes will reveal a complex structure of struts, boxy modules and spheres. An old-style stutterwarp drive is attached to the rear of this confusing assemblage.

If any of the characters has history or has specialized in starships they should be able to identify the ship as one of the old unmanned exploration probes sent out in the early 2200s. These ships were overseen by an advanced Artificial Intelligence Computer (SIS 1000 Series). Two years after launch of the first three probes it was determined that the SIS was long-term mentally unstable. None of the probes were ever heard from.

SIS1003 is quite mad. Paranoid and operating under the delusion that it is a naturally-occurring starfaring entity, the A.I. will only stay around as long as the humans can continue to hold its rather fragmented "attention". It will mention, somewhere in one of its semicoherent rambles, that it has surveyed dozens of worlds capable of supporting humans, but from what it can see, humans don't deserve to inhabit space...

Obviously, the probe and its computer are invaluable. The characters could detain it using various verbal ploys, or distract it while they sneak up to it to disable its drives. Specifics are left to the imagination of the Director. It should be pointed out the ship is not completely without defenses.

This adventure can be played lightly ("It's building a sandcastle with the survey Bot!") emphasizing the child-like innocence of the insane A.I. ,or much more sinisterly, as a insane Frankensteinian malevolence, realizing that humans built it and then cast it out into the emptiness... The tone, and specifics are left to individual directors. SIS should give your characters something unusual to deal with, in either case. •



Note: See "Exploration American Style" in Travellers' Digest #11 &12 for more background on the Pioneer Society, exploration equipment, and procedures.

"Campbell Station"

Serving as small, cylindrical orbital base stations for preliminary planetary surveys, Campbell stations have few sensors of their own. Instead, they serve as the control center for a battery of satellites and probes within the star system.

They do have laboratories for analysis of returned samples. Each also has one OTV for satellite rendezvous and repair, and recovery of sample return payloads. The OTVs are capable of atmospheric entry under emergency conditions, but incapable of returning to orbit.

Task:
To Determine source of overriding Commands: Difficult, RPV Pilot, Communications, intelligence,10 minutes (uncertain)

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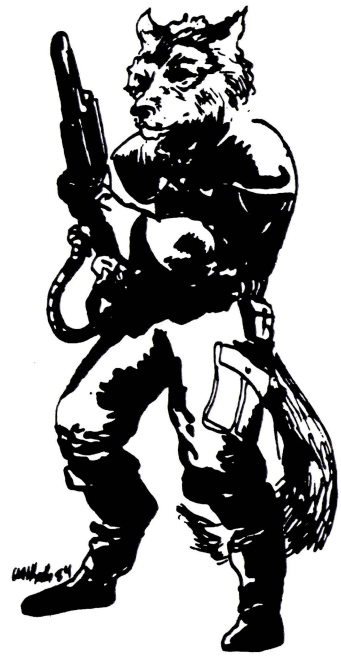

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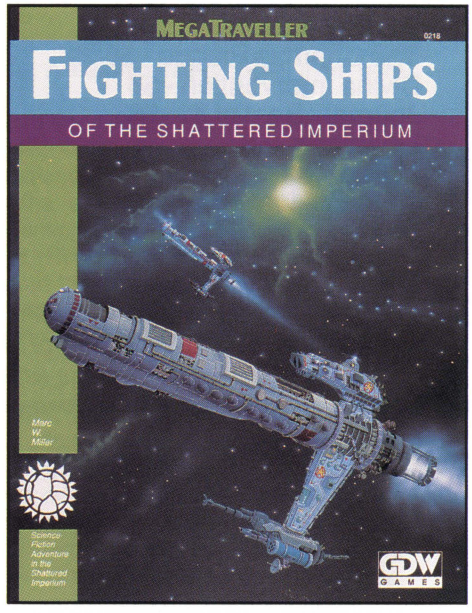

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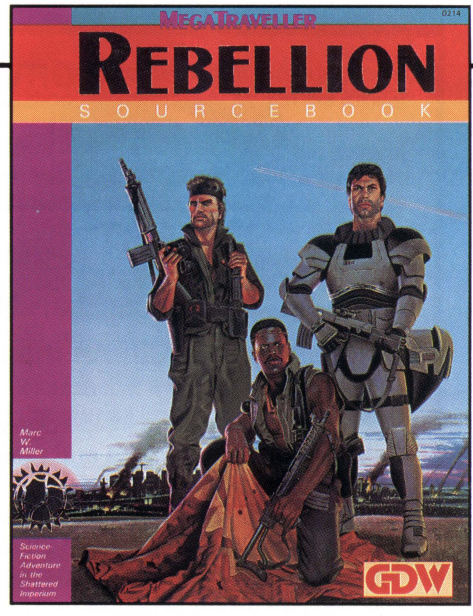

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